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CONFESSIO MEDICI

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TORONTO

CONFESSIO MEDICI

BY THE WRITER OF

"THE YOUNG PEOPLE"

(Stephen Paget.)

"The physician is the flower (such as it is) of our civilisation; and when that stage of man is done with, and only remembered to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race."

STEVENSON.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1908

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PREFACE

A POOR writer is always tempted by the titles of old books. It is hard on him, that he may not write again 'The Anatomy of Melancholy,' or 'Pride and Prejudice,' or 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' But I, not daring to steal from one of my betters, have stolen from two; from Sir Thomas Browne and from Gower. Consider what temptation is exposed on the top of Gower's monument. There he lies, as near as he can get to Shakspeare's brother: and his effigy has for a pillow his three books, whose titles, 'Vox Clamantis,' 'Speculum Meditantis,' 'Confessio Amantis,' make me say to myself, as Blücher said of London, *Was für Plunder*. If only I might have them, which would be no loss to Gower, I could write a most noble trilogy. 'Vox Clamantis' would be easy work: it would write itself, in a fortnight, in a red-hot rage, all drums and trumpets, thunder and lightning. Then, 'Speculum Meditantis,' in two big volumes, every sentence polished and exact: a book not to read, but to

give to public libraries. Last, 'Confessio Amantis.' A less careful thief would put them in a different order, would begin with 'The Lover's Confession,' young A murmuring to Miss B, *Dearest, I confess to you that I have been in love before, with C, D, E, and many, many other letters of the alphabet; but never with Ampazand. I swear to you, my darling, that you need not be jealous of poor Ampazand.* Of that sort of Lover's Confession, I only say that young A is happy and thrice blessed, if he has nothing to confess to his God but what he can tell to his sweetheart. But I have arranged my trilogy the right way; for 'Confessio Amantis' signifies not the confessions of a lover, but confession of love.

Not all confession is of sins: and a man may confess his faith, his ignorance, or his love. Use the word as we will, it means no more than this, that he goes outside himself for answer, assurance, audience. Faith joins the company of the faithful, ignorance asks for enlightenment, and love asks for love. We do not talk of confessing Euclid, or cookery, or sport: for they are complete in themselves. To confess, is to appeal to our fellow-creatures, it may be to one, it may be to all, for sympathy and a fair hearing.

But is it necessary, or wise, or quite like a gentleman, thus to run to confession, and, as it were, to seed? Has everybody got something to

say worth saying? Are not they the nicest people, who say nothing? Indeed, that may be true; and if ever, like Prospero, I recover my dukedom, I will drown my book: but there comes a time, even to people who might otherwise be nice, when they find pleasure in writing. They are tired of their own company; they have lived inside their hearts till they know every stick of the furniture: they desire now, before it is too late, to leave that narrow lodging, to say what they think, and to proclaim what they have learned. Silence is golden; but gold is for circulation. They are sick of silence: it is not vanity, but human nature, that makes them want to address themselves to anybody who will listen to them. In brief, they feel the need of confession.

Rome gives this meaning to the word. At Rome, the Confessio, in this or that church, is the wide sunken space, in front of the altar, surrounded by a balustrade. The saint, whose body lies under the altar, is by this device kept above ground, and there is no right of way over his bones. After his death, he found that he had not finished what he was saying when he died. For that reason, he stays among the living. Between them and him, nothing interferes, neither Mother Church nor Mother Earth: he is still in the world, level with present affairs, unburied, attentive. *Confiteor*, says he; and waits for the word to come back to him.

That is why this part of the church is called Confessio. Here is no place for the confession of sins: all such business must be transacted elsewhere, not with a saint but with a fellow-sinner, in a box; not here, across this open treasury, walled with marbles, and lit with silver lamps. This *atrium*, this court-yard in front of the saint's little house under the altar, was designed for more cheerful exercises: here, he gives audience, and has requested the pleasure of my company. I am to stand at the balustrade, and he will speak to me, confessing his faith, in the hope that I shall repeat it after him: but he has not the faintest wish to hear about my sins.

People are so careless, what they say to him. Shock-headed children tell him how naughty they have been, and pray him to save them from a whipping. Old women, short of breath, set down their market-baskets, and confide to him the gossip of the neighbourhood and the state of their health. Tourists, which is the most unkindest cut of all, read guide-books to him, and he hears, a dozen times a day, who he is, when he died, and how many lamps are burning in front of him. *But of course*, say the tourists, *you mustn't believe all that; and I don't suppose for a moment that he is really there:* which is our way, when we visit the Eternal City. The porter cheated us on Monday, and the flower-girl was so impudent on Tuesday, and it

rained all Wednesday, and to-day is only Thursday, and is it likely, that a saint would be genuine? Thus we see Rome, and make ourselves beloved there. Anyhow, here I stand at the approach to his house, and might be in a worse place: for he is a most eloquent handful of dust, and of great age. He loves courtesy, he hates controversy: he knows nothing, happy saint, of the way I pronounce Latin. He asks me, not to confess my sins to him, but to say his *Confiteor* with him. What can I do, as one gentleman to another, but hide the guide-book, and endeavour to say something suitable to the occasion?

It is in this sense, and no other, that the word Confessio is used here. For here is no confession of sins and errors, no disclosure of secrets, no mention of names, no memory of offence, no airs of penitence. I neither ravel-out my weaved-up follies, nor complain that I wasted Time, and now doth Time waste me. Even if it were true, I am not minded to talk in that silly way. I only want to confess what I have learned, so far as I have come, from my life, so far as it has gone.

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VOCATION

It is said that there is a difference between profession and vocation; that the doctor has a profession, and the priest has a vocation. But I find, from Johnson's Dictionary, that Swift uses the latter word of the vilest of all trades, and that Shakspeare makes Joan of Arc use it of her *contemptible estate* as a farm-hand:

> Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,
> And to sun's parching heat displayed my cheeks,
> God's Mother deigned to appear to me:
> And, in a vision full of majesty,
> Willed me to leave my base vocation,
> And free my country from calamity.

He misses the point, that her voices were her vocation. That is the worst of Latin words: they are good servants, but bad masters. When I meet a long Latin word, in a line of quiet English, elbowing its neighbours right and left, like a motor-omnibus raging down a country lane, I stop it, and ask to see its root. That is the way to

take the conceit out of all such words. Here is one, which so impressed Shakspeare that he made four syllables of it: but its root, *vo* or *voc*, is a mere animal noise, the cry of an ape courting an ape. Away with Latinity. If it could thus impress Shakspeare, what may it not do with us? Let us be agreed, that a vocation is a call, or a calling. But here is a new difficulty. For it is one thing, to have a call, and another, to have a calling; and a man may have either, or both. Joan of Arc had a call to leave her calling: Burns followed the calling of an exciseman, and the call of poetry. There is no call for anybody to run another music-hall in London, or to make a huge profit, in time of war, out of his country's army: still, a man thus engaged might say that he had a calling. Again, a man is called to the Bar: but they are mortal voices which call him, and most unlike those heard by Joan of Arc. Again, in Medicine, many of us are glad that we have a calling, but doubtful whether we had a call.

It is certain, that some men are indeed called to be doctors: and so are some women. They are, as we say, born doctors: they were shapen in Medicine. So apt are they to their work, and it to them, that they almost persuade me to hold opinion with Pythagoras, and to believe that in some previous existence they were in general practice. Or their ability may be the result of

inheritance: but we know next to nothing about inheritance, neither is it imaginable by what physical processes the babe unborn is predisposed for one profession. Still, there are men and women, but not a great number, created for the service of Medicine: who were called to be doctors when they were not yet called to be babies.

To this word *call*, Johnson assigns no less than nine meanings: but I am concerned only with those which he numbers 3 and 4, quoting in support of them the honoured names of Milton, Dryden, and Locke. Call 3 is divine vocation, summons to true religion: call 4 is a summons from heaven, an impulse. I cannot see any difference between divine vocation and a summons from heaven, or between a summons from heaven and a summons to true religion. To say that a man is called to be a doctor, is no more than to say that he is designed for that life, as coals are designed for fuel, and candles for light. And, of course, a call is not bound to be ante-natal: it can come when it likes. For example, take, in *Middlemarch*, Lydgate's call:

> One vacation, a wet day sent him to the small home-library, to hunt once more for a book which might have some freshness for him: in vain! unless, indeed, he took down a dusty row of volumes with grey-paper backs and dingy labels — the volumes of an old Cyclopaedia which he had never disturbed. . . . The page he opened on was under the head of Anatomy, and the first passage that drew his eyes was on the

valves of the heart. He was not much acquainted with valves of any sort, but he knew that *valvae* were folding doors, and through this crevice came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of finely-adapted mechanism in the human frame. . . . The moment of vocation had come, and, before he got down from his chair, the world was made new to him by a presentment of endless processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour, Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.

But, if the call had been addressed to his intellect alone, he would have turned toward science rather than practice. Therefore we read again of him:

His scientific interest soon took the form of a professional enthusiasm. . . . He carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship which withstood all the abstractions of special study. He cared not only for 'cases,' but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth.

Again, he was called not only to science and to practice, but to the advancement of his profession:

He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he came home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues,

jealousies, and social trucklings, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work.

Read *Middlemarch*, I say to all students. Lydgate died long ago: for it is near eighty years since he started in practice, at a time when *most medical practice was still strutting or shambling along the old paths*. But the whole story of his life — believe me, Gentlemen, it will help you more than all the novels of the last quarter of a century. Besides, it will save you from falling in love with young ladies like Rosamond. Read *Middlemarch*, I tell you: and, if Lydgate's life does not touch you, ask yourselves whether you have any call to be doctors.

But Lydgates are rare: and fathers and mothers, bent on making a doctor of one of the children, must not take the boy's mere vagaries as a sign that he is intended for that profession. *I mean to be a doctor like Father*, says he, and they rejoice over him; and a month later he wants to be a fireman, or a member of Parliament. Or he is neat with his fingers, rides well, understands the ways of animals, and loves to attend the minor ailments of the family: and then all that side of him goes, and he gives himself to poetry, or, which is worse, to music. Or he is ambitious, and will make a great name, a great discovery: and again the wind catches the weather-cock, and he praises a leisurely life and the happiness of insignificance. His parents look in vain

for such assurance as may justify action. *Time will show*, they say, and wait; but nothing happens, nothing decisive. Something must be done; Time, still silent, is up: they determine, amid hopes and fears which he hardly notices, that he shall study Medicine. For all fathers and mothers thus perplexed, there is consolation in Bacon's essay, 'Of Parents and Children':

> Let Parents choose betimes the Vocations and Courses they mean their Children should take, for then are they most flexible: and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their Children, as thinking they will take best to that which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the Affection or Aptness of the Children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it: but generally the precept is good, *Optimum elige; suave et facile faciet illud Consuetudo.*

And what better profession than Medicine, what more liberal and loveable, for a young man at a loose end? As Matthew Arnold said of religion, that it is morality touched with emotion, so practice is science touched with emotion: which is a fine occupation for any young man of no affection or aptness so extraordinary that it may not safely be crossed. If we all had to sit and wait for such a call as came to Lydgate, many of us would be sitting there still, wearying our kind elders, and sick of waiting. *Give me something to do*, cry the young men, *put me into a decent profession, and let me take my chance. Jack is in the Navy, and Joe*

is in the City, and bless me also, O my father, and find me some work, I don't much care what. Here, in this wholesome impatience, are opportunity and guidance: so it comes to pass, that all other plans of the family council are put aside, and one more young man sets out to be a doctor.

To want to be wanted, to fight and shove, single-handed, for a place in the world, are evidence of strength. To count on the help and influence of other men, to wonder what A and B will do for us, are evidence of weakness. Especially, a young man must be careful to reckon a successful father not among his assets, but among his liabilities. For he who enters his father's profession counting on his father's name, enters it at his peril: and his venture is the more perilous, if he takes, in the same profession, the same line. There was Icarus, son of Daedalus: he fashioned for himself wings, to follow his father aloft; and they bore him off the earth, but the wax of them was melted by the sun, and he fell into the sea. Practice is the solvent of all such wings: for it is the man himself, the skill of his hands, the judgment of his reason on the expert evidence of his senses, the quick selection and watchful use of the right set of facts. It cannot be taken over like a theatre-ticket or a share in a railway. Name, influence, privilege, succession, are what we make them. He who has them must use them, for they are part of his life, and

are there to be used: but they may fail him. Like Icarus, he is too much in the sun. Expectation waits upon him, and the word goes round that he ought to do well, with such advantages. It is pleasant for him, to rise into that soft air, and try his wings in the sunshine: but the heat of the sun may be too fierce for them. There is nothing disgraceful in that. They were an accurate copy of the wings of Daedalus: and every young man would like to have wings. And, after all, though Icarus was drowned, yet it was a splendid adventure, to fly, even a little way: and wax was made to be melted.

Precept and example, from father to son, are gifts of more lasting stuff; but they are not imperishable. The place of each life in the other is always changing. If they could for a moment stand still, they would be like mirrors, face to face, each reflecting the other, and itself in the other, and the reflection of itself in the reflection of the other, in and in, to an immeasurable depth: but they are incessantly on the move. Outside forces, uncalculated events, interfere between them, till those early influences, which were so strong, fail. And then, at the last, there may be in store for the two lives a wonderful phase, when precept and example are permitted, gently, and by common consent, to take a rest. They have done their work; they belonged, it appears, to the Old Dispensation, the time when

home, now and again, had a feeling about it as of Mount Sinai, and there was thunder in the air. They are ended, and put away. The father's impatience, the son's disaffection, cease to be remembered: and the two lives, what is left of them together, touch, and stay close, without apology or excuse or explanation or self-pity, and are united. But this phase comes late, or may never come: for it often happens that just as the two lives almost touch, one of them stops.

Since name and influence, precept and example, and all else that our elders can give us, are thus fortuitous, we must look inside the man himself, to discover what is the good of a call. The moment we do that, we light on the obvious fact, that the good in men is only inside them because it is outside them. Thus we are brought back to Johnson's definition, number 4*a*, that a call is a summons from heaven. By what physical process it enters into the fabric of a man's life, we need not ask, or wait for an answer. It has an endless series of methods, and is not bound to any one of them: therefore, its presence is apt to be overlooked, and its very existence denied by minute philosophers. Every year, young men enter the medical profession who neither are born doctors, nor have any great love of science, nor are helped by name or influence. Without a welcome, without money, without prospects, they fight their way into practice, and in

practice; they find it hard work, ill-thanked, ill-paid: there are times when they say, *What call had I to be a doctor? I should have done better for myself and my wife and the children in some other calling.* But they stick to it, and that not only from necessity, but from pride, honour, conviction: and Heaven, sooner or later, lets them know what it thinks of them. The information comes quite as a surprise to them, being the first received, from any source, that they were indeed called to be doctors; and they hesitate to give the name of divine vocation to work paid by the job, and shamefully underpaid at that. Calls, they imagine, should master men, beating down on them: surely, a diploma, obtained by hard examination and hard cash, and signed and sealed by earthly examiners, cannot be a summons from heaven. But it may be. For, if a doctor's life may not be a divine vocation, then no life is a vocation, and nothing is divine.

HOSPITAL LIFE

GREAT Hospitals, with their Schools, are something more than blocks of buildings where patients are doctored, and students and nurses are taught. I do believe in the spirit of a place. To me, the *genius loci* is really there: and the *Religio Discipuli*, the student's obedience to the spirit of Hospital life, is a very important part of his education.

It is strange, in modern London, that the *genius loci* still survives as an object of worship: that here, at the heart of the Empire, a religion lingers which may fairly be called primitive. It bears traces of tribal origin: each Hospital has its local deity, whose votaries deride the gods of other Hospitals as idols, but offer at their own shrine gifts and sacrifices, especially on the first of October. The ritual, on such occasions, is frankly pagan. Let us look at these curious customs, and observe what gifts, at the October festival, are presented and accepted. For there are sacrifices which are not wanted, gifts which might as well be left outside

the precincts, and worthless promises. And even the meekest priest of the shrine may be able to assist the little crowd of worshippers, praising one, rebuking another, advising a third, and always on the look-out for such as are likely, by the excellence of their gifts and the importunity of their devotion, to become priests like himself.

In plain words, What gifts of heart and mind ought a student to bring to the service of his Hospital?

He ought to bring those gifts which come of a good disposition, a good home, and a good public school. He should have reverence, and a fair liking for work, and a certain simplicity or directness of thought; and should know Latin, and a manageable quantity of general facts; and should be resolute, in company, and even against company, to say the right thing and take the right side. One more gift he should have, which Time alone can give, a sufficient age. He is very young for life in London: and it is well for him if his father can send him to the University, there to learn his preliminary sciences, and thence to obtain, in due course, his degree. And here I touch the question, What is the value, to a medical student in London, of a previous existence at Cambridge or Oxford?

But I am not thinking of examinations, or of the study of those sciences which our students lightly call preliminary. I am thinking of the general

belief, that a medical student, who has been at Cambridge or Oxford, has thereby gained not only knowledge, but other accomplishments, which evade the coarse test of examination, but are of great help to him in Hospital life, and afterward in practice. An old University, it is believed, is a system of impressions, tones, and influences. It exercises on all faithful undergraduates the magic of beautiful buildings, immemorial traditions, immortal names; it sets them living and moving in a wonderful city where philosophers, poets, statesmen, scholars, and critics have lived and moved; it shows them, for the asking, the true ways of religion, friendship, logic, athletics, courtesy, and self-judgment. Henceforth, they are of the world's elect: for they have been where they have been, and there have learned to think and to feel. They give evidence of good style, good form, good taste; something in the clothes, the handwriting, the voice. If they praise a picture, a book, or a piece of music, we had better do the same; and, if they reconcile authorities who seem to us to be opposed, we may be sure that they are right: for they have visions which never come to us, and they wear on their foreheads, like a phylactery, the University arms. This belief is doubtless founded on fact, and assuredly is supported by fiction; and is dear to the foolish people who take every University man to be a gentleman, and treat their family doctor as a tradesman.

But the preliminary sciences, as their name implies, are on the very threshold of the undergraduate's life. Even in his first year, he dissects the earth-worm. So much the better for his future patients: he cannot too soon begin to learn his proper business. But I dare to ask him, *What, after all, is the difference between the University earth-worm and any other? You, at your time of life, what have you to do with forms of thought and points of view? Is there more than the one way for you, the same for all of us, to learn how to use your eyes and your hands? And are not your special studies opposed, on principle, to the old magic of your University?* He may answer, that he has no great respect for the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, and that all Universities ought to be Centres of Modern Thought: which is a dreadful phrase, on such young lips. Thirty years ago it was the preliminary sciences that were despised, and the nickname for the whole majestical circle of them was *Stinks*, more shame to Cambridge and Oxford. Thirty years hence, at the present rate — but I only say that not even undergraduates can have everything. If they love their sciences as they ought, they may fail to receive the non-scientific influences of the place.

And these influences, I think, are of very little use, either in Hospital life or in practice. There was a time, within the memory of men, when a student from Cambridge or Oxford was taken, not

without reason, to be vastly superior to other students; was observed, envied, privileged, marked for distinction. If the Hospital was honoured by a sufficient number of these rare young men, there would be an University set. Now, with the great and happy increase of the supply of them, and with the University of London crowned and enthroned, and with the rise of many new Universities, the times are changed, and there is no more talk, Heaven be praised, of University sets. But this change is not all due to the increased representation of the old Universities in Hospital life. The young men from Cambridge or Oxford would still tend to form sets, if they found any great difference between other students and themselves. They do not find it, and that for two reasons: first, because they do not look for it, and next, because it is not there.

They do not look for it; they are content to be freshmen again. One Alma Mater at a time is enough for them: and, as it were by instinct, they give to their Hospital the allegiance which they gave to their University. They are quick to see that the new Alma Mater does not care for any traditions but her own, and is averse from all academic or aesthetic modes. She prefers physiology to philosophy, museums to the Muses. She lets them know, at once, that she is too busy to be interested in their accomplishments, and that she does not

want to *think about thinking and feel about feeling*. It is as much as she has time for, to read the paper of a weekday, and get a walk in the park of a Sunday, and not often that: and as for stopping to hear about poetry, she really couldn't dream of such a thing, with so many cases waiting to be dressed, and the telephones going, though of course it is all very clever, and quite wonderful, what they have learned by heart, and how they can remember so much. Dear, wise, old Alma Mater, most practical, most loveable: they would be very stupid young men, if they were not glad to enter your service. Besides, they enjoy the sense of masquerade. To hide his pride is even more delightful, to a young man, than to air his pride: then, at the appropriate moment, like the Duke in the opera, he can fling open his mantle, and show on his breast the glittering star of the Order of the University. They say goodbye, without regret, to that leisurely University life, which was so exactly the right thing and the real article, and was enclosed in such a beautiful place. The sudden change shakes them out of themselves, and everything has something to say to them: they give to the new life their undivided loyalty, and do not look for a line between themselves and their fellow-students.

Nor would they find it, if they looked. He who brings to his Hospital the gifts of a good disposition, a good home, and a good public school, is a fair

match for him who comes from an University. The Hospital takes us for what we are, not for where we were. Inside its walls, we are all equal, and there is no opportunity for the Cambridge mind and the Oxford mind. It is doubtful, whether these minds are in general use even at the seats of learning assigned to them: it is certain, that they are not necessary for Hospital life. To every deserving community, Heaven gives a mind: and provides, for its life, a proper setting.

The setting of the life of a Hospital, the buildings, and such works of art as the Hospital may possess, are shown to every visitor. But, to observe its mind, the visitor need not go further than the Hospital garden; that quiet place, which is no more like the outside world than home is like a music-hall. For the *genius loci* loves the open air; and the Hospital garden is his sacred grove. And it shall be summer-time, with patients lying under the shade of the plane-trees, and nurses bringing tea to them, and students, bare-headed, playing tennis, or talking over the day's affairs, or just doing nothing. Of itself, it may be not much of a garden: but we admire it as an open space, a great well of light and air, a shaft of health sunk into diseased and injured London. This pleasant old-fashioned quadrangle, blessed with sunshine and silence and an excellent view of the sky, is the centre of the Hospital life: and a visitor, loitering

here, will see that we are a brotherhood, and that the patients are our guests. Every Hospital is a charity: but there is a difference between charity and hospitality. They who give money to Hospitals are charitable; we, who have the spending of it, are hospitable: and, of course, it is we who get the fun out of the money. And we spend it well, entertaining in good style our innumerable guests.

All of us, staff and students, sisters and nurses, residents, lecturers, and officials, work together, keeping open house. Our students, a brotherhood within a brotherhood, live under communal rules, mostly of their own making. In some Hospitals, there are Colleges, where students reside, with admirable opportunities for reading, and, more's the pity, for bridge; and enjoy the intimate life, a time so pleasant that every student ought to have it for a part, at least, of his course. There is the more need, now, to maintain the unity of Hospital life, because the University of London is beginning to relieve some Hospitals of the heavy honour of teaching the preliminary sciences. The advantages of this change are crossed by the fear lest the new student should feel unattached. *I'm not much wanted here*, he might say, at the Hospital; and, *I shall not be wanted here, once I'm through*, at his work outside the Hospital. Every student, from the beginning, reckons on the right of immediate access to the local deity. But, now that the new Universities attract

so many students who but for them would be in London, we must submit to change, knowing that we are in good hands. I have a dream of the future. Within the estate of each great Hospital, there is a great College of the University of London, with rooms for all, or nearly all, its students. I cannot see, in my dream, whether the Hospital is still in London, or has fled into the country: but I think that it has fled, and has left on its old site a little Hospital for accidents and emergencies. Anyhow, where the great Hospital is, there is the College, a splendid range of buildings, worthy of an University of London, with Chapel, Hall, Common-rooms, Library, swimming-bath, gymnasium, all perfect. The residential life, the sense of attachment, are part of the secret of the old Universities: and we, no less, desire that our life should have that setting which it deserves.

Or will anybody say that the *genius loci* is all nonsense, and that a great Hospital is only a big machine? My answer is, that I know what I am talking about. Sickness, as Lucretius says of impending death, shows us things as they are: the mask is torn off, the facts remain. That is the spiritual method of the Hospital: it makes use of sickness, to show us things as they are. This delicate word, *sickness*, includes drink, the contagious diseases, infant mortality, starvation, the sweating system, the immigrant alien, dangerous

trades, insanity, childbirth, heredity, attempted suicide, accidents, assaults, and all the innumerable adventures, tragical or comical, which end in the Casualty Department. To a young man of good disposition, tired of the preliminary sciences, and of humanity stated in terms of anatomy and physiology to the satisfaction of the examiners, this plunge into the actual flood of lives is a fine experience. Hitherto, he has learned organisms; now, he begins to learn lives. He need not go, like other young men, for that lesson, to the slums; for they come to him, and that thrilling drama, *How the Poor Live,* is played to him, daily, by the entire company, hero and heroine, villain and victim, comic relief, scenic effects, and a great crowd of supers at the back of the stage — undesired babies, weedy little boys and girls, Hooligans, consumptive workpeople, unintelligible foreigners, voluble ladies, old folk of diverse temperaments, and many, too many, more comfortable but not more interesting people. It all happens so naturally, with such a quick and sure touch: the reality of the day's work, the primal meaning of the crowd, the clash of hand-to-hand encounter with diseases and injuries, urge him to unexpected uses of himself. Here are the very people of the streets, whom he passes every day, here they are coming to him for help, to him of all men, telling him all about it, how it happened, what it feels like, why they did it: looking to him, right

away, for advice and physic. They are no two of them quite alike: and their records, laid before him, range through every intermediate shade from purest white to a nauseating black. He begins to see that he has more to learn than the use of a stethoscope: he must learn lives. The problem of lives exalted, or sunk, or messed away, knocks at his heart. Let other young men write lurid little books, and tear the veil from the obvious, and be proud of that achievement: what are they to him, who entertains daily, as a matter of course, both Hell and Heaven?

I say that he sees things as they are; but I do not say that he puts a right interpretation to all that he sees. At first, I think, he is apt to look too hard at the dark side. There are times when all London seems to him rotten with the contagious diseases and sodden with drink, a city as gross and vulgar as Rome under Nero; and down with a crash come Faith, Hope, and Charity, and he reads the universe as a bad job, and half wonders what is the good, in such a world, of being good. That is the shock of collision with things as they are: and you may hear him quoting, *Hell was a city very much like London.* But the bright side, the courage and patience of the majority of his guests, their courtesy, their honour, their humour, are always before him: which may help him to set up again, on stronger pedestals, these three.

He works under the guidance of his seniors, and refers some of his perplexities, but not all, to them, and is but a point in a system. He cannot feed the hungry, but he can give them cod-liver oil, and, if the Hospital can afford it for out-patients, maltine; and he knows how to get at the Samaritan Fund. He cannot clothe the naked; but he can tell the drunkards not to drink the shirts off their backs. Poor himself, he enjoys the exercise of hospitality, and his alms and kind acts are of singular felicity. His acquaintance with his guests is off-hand, but fairly accurate so far as it goes: he has wide generic names for them, Polly, Tommy, Granny, Daddy, and for the immigrant alien the vague title of Abraham. Not all deserve his compassion, and it is his duty to tell some what he thinks of them, for he sees parents dead-drunk, girls beaten by the men who live on their shame, and children dying of neglect: he is bound to rage, not grin, over such cases. But, if he rages, it is to good purpose; if he chaffs, it is taken in good part: and the voluble lady, sipping his well-meant pint of mild tonic on the Hospital steps, calls him a nice young chap, and advises the neighbourhood to be sure they have him, next time they go there.

In the wards, where quiet and order reign, he has further opportunities for insight, and for more deliberate observation. He learns, with higher exactness, to trust and to distrust himself, to be

slow to find fault with other men and quick to help them: he becomes acquainted with heavy responsibility, with the full bitterness of a bad mistake, the full delight of pulling people out of death's way. He begins to be able to read characters, and to see, by the scars on the lives allotted to his care, what havoc we make of our chances.

Finally, if he obtains, when he is qualified, the office of a House-physician or a House-surgeon, he has a time so happy, so rich in friendship, advancement, and experience, that he hates the day when he must say goodbye to the Hospital. *Deus in medio ejus*, says he; *non commovebitur*. Years ago, he brought his gifts to the shrine, and they were accepted: and the spirit of the place has approved his long and faithful service.

Contrast, with these crowded years, the narrow outlook and bookish studies of young men reading for the Bar, or for the Civil Service: who have no Hospital, and entertain nobody. Or look away, from the sleepless energy of a great Hospital, to the emptiness of the City after office-hours, and the wastes of South Kensington from Saturday to Monday. There is not one profession that we need envy: for there is none that gives to its students such a good introduction to things as they are.

I have attributed to my imaginary student a more emotional temperament than the public

admires in its doctors; for I wanted to say, as clearly as I could, that a great Hospital is something more than a big machine. All the same, the public is right: emotional students do not make successful practitioners. *A man of sentiment: well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment*, says Sir Peter Teazle. Then, down comes the screen, and he changes his mind: *If you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment.* So says the public, when it is ill, really ill, to the practitioner.

Now that I have mentioned the practitioner, I must end and sum up this discourse *de Religione Discipuli.* Every student ought to bring to the service of his Hospital the gifts of a good disposition, a good home, and a good public school. He need not bring gifts which will hardly be wanted: the spirit of the place is a rustic deity, caring little for elaborate offerings. He should love the Hospital life; remembering, that it is likely to be changed. Tribal worship, rival shrines, and all such paganism, must reckon with the University of London, whose faith hath centre everywhere. Already, in the teaching of the threshold sciences, this change is beginning: and the time may come when it shall be said, on behalf of medical education, that even for clinical teaching the Hospitals of London ought to work together, abandon competition, break their distinctive idols,

throw open their sacred groves, and pool their patients. That would be a new version of the story of Bethesda: and the waters of that pool would indeed be troubled. A Hospital patient has no desire to be associated with any body but his own. He likes the off-hand, homely, old-fashioned kindliness of a good Hospital: he makes a friend or two, and keeps them. Of us, who entertain him, it may be for a day, it may be for months, he is of opinion that we are a very decent lot, especially Sister. He does not always admire us all: but he would not care to be run by the London County Council, or by the Labour Party; and I agree with him. In medical education, let us welcome loyally any change that will help us to do more for our patients: but let us hold fast to the unity of Hospital life, and to our bounden duty to the spirit of the place.

AN ESSAY FOR STUDENTS

I DARE to preach to students, for this reason, that they preach, so many of my juniors, to me. One by his love of practice, another by his love of science; one by his confidence, another by his diffidence; one by what he can do, another by what he can do without. Now it is my turn. I want to say what I think about Psychology. I believe that many students, by a loose and off-hand notion of Psychology, do themselves more harm than good, and go into practice believing what is not true. Illogical talk drifts, like a mist, through Hospital life, all tending to deny that the word Psyche means anything. I hate that sort of talk. If this Confessio Medici is to be of any use to students, it will be, I hope, here, in this essay on Psychology.

I

I sit at my writing-table, and see, through the window, a beggarly strip of grey sky, and the backs of some houses, and the flickering leaves of

a tree round the corner. I hear the sound of bricklayers at work on my neighbour's premises: and now and again a motor hoots. The furniture of the room, so familiar that it seems thought-worn, is of such and such colours and shapes. A moment ago, I hardly noticed my surroundings: now, they are asserting themselves. Light and outline and contrast and contact are appealing to me, bidding for recognition, elbowing their way to me, throwing themselves at my head: and in at the window comes a new legion of auxiliary sounds, of rain, and a piano somewhere, and far-off traffic. I feel like a theatre when the doors open, and the queues are admitted to pit and gallery. I am filling-up quick: and it only needs the smell and the taste of a cigarette, or a mouthful of food, to occupy the reserved seats. There, I have lighted a cigarette: and now my senses can say, with proper pride, *House Full: Standing Room Only*. The use of such a notice is many centuries old: for there is in the British Museum a stone slab, with holes bored in it for immediate hoisting — *Circus Plenus, Clamor Ingens*. That is the present state of my mind, *Circus Plenus*. The doors opened, and the external world came in: and that, not disorderly but orderly, with all pomp and circumstance of reality, wealth of incident, and majesty of association.

External, I call the world: it is a strange adjective. My hand, as I sit here writing, holds a

wooden penholder, and rests on a table which is covered with a green cloth. The penholder, of course, is a part of the external world: but how about my hand? Looking at the two implements, and observing how they work together, I do not see that the one is more external than the other. I separate them, and lay them on the table, side by side, a few inches apart; I join them again, and use them as one implement, part made of wood, part made of hand. I find no evidence that the external world stops at my enveloping skin, at the exact plane where my pen and my hand are in contact. Likewise, when I have my hair cut, the hair which stays, on the near side of the scissors, is just as external as the hair which falls, on the far side of the scissors. Or take these three cases. A had his leg amputated: the surgeon removed, but did not externalize, the leg. They buried it in the garden; and A, when he got on crutches, went, for his first walk, to its graveside: it was still, he said, his leg. B swallowed a sixpence: he made a good recovery, so good that it included the recovery of the sixpence, which, of course, had been external to him all the time. C died of drink: it wrought the usual changes in his tissues: it could not have got at them, unless they had been just as external as itself. Once we begin to talk as if the external world were outside our skins, there is no end to casuistry.

But let us take some object which is wholly extra-corporeal. To me, at this moment, the external world offers, as a sample of its wares, this green tablecloth here under my hand. Here is a miracle indeed, and a whole legion of them: for there is no other or greater in the universe than I may find in this bit of serge. It was the fashion, when I was a child, for our teachers to show us familiar objects under the microscope. A needle-end looking like a poker, a flea looking like a night-mare, enlarged our minds by their own enlargement; and wonder, like beauty, drew us by a single hair. We examined the dust off a butterfly's wing, and behold, it was a myriad of scales delicately shaped and ribbed like palm-leaf fans; or we saw in a drop of blood the rouleaux of red corpuscles: and were amazed, but there we stopped, not wondering how these facts of the external world found their way to us. And, I think, we were tempted to believe that we had somehow accounted for Nature by magnifying her belongings; and that nothing remained to be said, when we had seen what the microscope had to say. The real excitement, of course, begins where the microscope leaves off. Imagination divides a speck of dust into its component parts, and each of these into its component parts, and so on, till we go over the edge of thought, still thinking of that which is divisible: the microscope cares only for the evidence

of its own eyes, and takes no interest in the mere fact that objects are visible.

This tablecloth, what is it? How does it contrive to enter into my life and stay there? What has happened, that here is a tablecloth? I cannot hope to find the right answer, or any answer, to these questions, unless I approach them in the proper spirit. Here, between my finger and thumb, is all that anything material has been, or is, or ever will be. If I can understand this fold of stuff, I can understand the stars. We need not look at large objects a long way off, when we want to philosophize: the universe should be studied not in bulk but in sample. It follows, that I must reverence in this cloth, or in a single thread of its fabric, all those immensities and eternities which I reverence in the universe, or, as the fashion is to call it, the cosmos, which is a very inferior word. If the heavens declare the glory of God, so does the tablecloth: if it does not, neither do they. I will go down on my knees before it, and stay there.

Kneeling to these unconsecrated elements of warp and woof, I begin to think that I see where Psychology has gone wrong. She is so anxious to be a complete science, that she refuses to be surprised at the universe: she affects the cold matter-of-fact demeanour of the sciences which are complete. They cut me, they cut me dead, these sciences, they fix a vacant stare, and slay me with their noble

birth: and Psychology, that she may get into their set, imitates them. It is not their way, to wonder that the universe is here: they are sure that nothing in Nature is unnatural, and that the infinite is only the rest of the finite. Chemistry is not surprised when salt dissolves in water, nor Botany when a bulb turns into a hyacinth, nor Biology when an egg, discarding its original design for a pair of gills, turns into a chicken. They would be ashamed, these quiet gentlewomen, of gasping and exclaiming over normal phenomena: they never forget themselves in Ohs and Ahs, like the crowd at the Crystal Palace when the rockets explode. Therefore Psychology, that she may be admitted to their circle, apes their tone.

She insists on it, that she is a science. In vain the wisest of her servants, Professor James, tells her that she is not: and that, of all places, in his Text-book of Psychology. His first words to her, on page 1, are to the effect that she is not a science: and his last words, on page 468, are to the same effect. He begins by shaking the dust of her house off his feet: and he ends by shaking them again, to make sure. On page 1, he calls her a provisional beginning of learning, and says that she must stick to her own arbitrarily selected problems, and ignore all others. "Psychology," he says on page 2, "as a natural science, deals with things in a partial and provisional way. In addition to the 'material

world,' which the other sciences of nature assume, she assumes additional data peculiarly her own, and leaves it to more developed parts of Philosophy to test their ulterior significance and truth." On page 468, the last page of all, he fairly lets himself go. "*This is no science, it is only the hope of a science.* The matter of a science is with us. Something definite happens when to a certain brain-state a certain 'sciousness' corresponds. A genuine glimpse into what it is would be *the* scientific achievement, before which all past achievements would pale. *But, at present, psychology is in the condition of physics before Galileo and the laws of motion,* of chemistry before Lavoisier and the notion that mass is preserved in all reactions. The Galileo and the Lavoisier of psychology will be famous men indeed when they come, as come they one day surely will, or past successes are no index to the future. *When they do come, however, the necessities of the case will make them 'metaphysical.'*"

The italics, I am proud to say, are mine. And there the book ends, with a final warning to Psychology that her assumptions are provisional and revisable, and that she is groping in great darkness: and nothing is left to be read but the index, and the slip from the *Times* Book Club, with the good news that I can buy all this wisdom in Class B for less than it is worth. For I love a text-book of Psychology which begins and ends

with the assurance that I need not be frightened, though the experimental psychologists furiously rage together, and imagine a vain thing. Professor James is like Jehu. Psychology paints her face, and tires her head, and looks out of the window: and *Throw her down*, says he, and treads her under foot. Then, when he has gone in, and has eaten and drunk in the house of Philosophy, *Go*, says he, *See now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a King's daughter:* and they go, and find no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of the hands.

She assumes the material world. It has an inverted comma on either side of it, and she assumes it in spite of those warning signals. She assumes, also, certain additional data peculiarly her own, which have not had their ulterior significance tested, nor their truth. Who told her that she might do that? Who gave her those data? If nobody gave them to her, if she simply took them, in what sense are they her own? I might assume, provisionally, the name of John Sebastian Bach: but would it be my name? And what is the difference, if any, between the ulterior significance of a datum, and its truth? Or between ulterior significance and any other sort of significance? And what measure of faith do we owe to the hope of a science?

At present, Psychology is in the condition of physics

before Galileo. That is a blessed sentence; and I will have it framed and glazed, and hung where I can lie in bed and look at it, next time I am ill. It is a great help, it leaves the mind so free, to have such a text before the eyes. Even more soothing is the promise that future psychologists, who will really know what Psyche is — alas, I shall not live to see that day — will be, by the necessities of the case, philosophers. There they are, that angelic host, the necessities of the case. Far above the additional data which have not yet been tested, and the great darkness in which this unscientific science gropes, the necessities of the case stand and wait. What will they do, what will they not do, in that day of Armageddon when they shall take Psychology seriously in hand?

Suppose that I ordered a coat, a bicycle, and a watch, and that each of them arrived piecemeal, a loose lot of parts; the coat cut-out but not sewn together, the bicycle in three packing-cases, the watch a disconnected handful of bits of machinery. With the coat, this letter — *Please to kindly regard this consignment as provisional and revisable. We are forwarding to you the data of your coat, as per esteemed order. Their ulterior significance must be tested by some more developed firm. This is not a coat, it is only the hope of a coat. We send you the matter of a coat, something definite, which has happened: but we regret that we have not been able to obtain*

a genuine glimpse into what it is. When we do, you will be pleased to find that the coat, by the necessities of the case, will put itself together. Hoping for the continuance of your valuable patronage. — Such a letter would make me think that tailoring is not an art, any more than Psychology is a science, for all her assumptions.

Not that her assumptions, of themselves, matter twopence, one way or the other. It is the use that she makes of them, which matters. Assumptions are honourable, or dishonourable, according to their intention. If I had to attend a fancy-dress ball, which Heaven forbid, I should go as a Gentleman of the time of Charles the Second. That would be all right. I should assume the appropriate clothes, and a long peruke. Nobody would be deluded, or unduly impressed: nobody would think that I was really of that period. I must go as something, or I cannot go at all. But suppose that I assume, in the corner of a cheque, the signature of a rich friend. How will it fare with me and my honour, when the ulterior significance of that assumption is tested by the cashier at the Bank? And I make bold to say that Psychology, or, at any rate, a certain talkative lady who calls herself by that name, is not very scrupulous what she assumes, nor very careful of her honour. She longs to be a science, to move in the best circles, in a set not her own, in the drawing-

rooms of those old peeresses, the Complete Sciences. To get there, she must push and pose, and be hard, pretentious, in a word, unprincipled. Watch her, hinting, cajoling, fighting her way into their society, and you will be reminded of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who was, you remember, Becky Sharp, in the company of Lady Steyne, Lady Jane Crawley, and the Dowager Countess of Southdown. And we all know what happened to Becky, when her husband was compelled, by the necessities of the case, to test her ulterior significance.

II

Still, we hear so much of the Principles of Psychology, that we are bound to try to find them. But what do we mean, by this word Principles?

When a man sets to work to study one of the natural sciences, he provides himself with forms of thought, mental images, which may be called the principles of that science. The chemist has mental images of atoms combining or separating, under definite laws, with definite results: the geologist has mental images of an earth cooled through millions of years from a red-hot haze of gases to a hard globe, and cracked in the cooling. Other men of science, the botanist, the bacteriologist, the physiologist, have mental images of living matter.

Is there any difference, in kind, between the mental images of chemistry and those of physiology? Surely, there is no such difference. Matter is none the less matter, though it be living: and motion is none the less motion, though it be voluntary.

Dr. Johnson's advice is apt here, that we should clear our minds of cant. A great deal of cant is talked about the mystery of life, as if life were somehow more mysterious than the rest of Nature. When a man says that one fact of Nature is more wonderful than another, he is at fault. The striking of a match is every bit as wonderful as the working of a brain: the union of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen in a molecule of water is every bit as wonderful as the growth of a child. Nature does not class her works in order of merit; everything is just as easy to her as everything else: she puts her whole mind into all that she does —

> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent —

perfect at every moment, omnipresent, and, like His Majesty the King, within her dominions supreme. Life is neither more nor less mysterious than the attraction of the magnet, the density of a paving-stone, or the colour of a tie: our presence in the midst of Nature's achievements does not affect her estimate of them. She prices her wonderful goods all at the same value, like the stock of a sixpence-halfpenny bazaar, nothing under and

nothing over: she makes them all out of the one stuff, constructing with it a grain of sand, a drop of water, a micro-organism, or a nerve-cell, all with equal ease. In brief, all Nature is of the same nature, all her processes are one process, all her facts are one fact, all her acts are one act, and everything material is ultimately identical with everything else. These platitudes, of course, are of a respectable age: they are no more than the doctrine of Thales of Miletus, who lived, if I remember right, six hundred years before our Lord. Arm-in-arm with Thales, I wonder at the mystery of the fabric of my own brain as I wonder at the mystery of the fabric of a pound of butter; and I take it for granted, that the forces which animate my tissues are just as natural, that is to say, are just the same, as the forces which animate the tissues of an ape, a frog, an oyster, or a dandelion, and thrill in every grain of sand, and compel two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen to clutch each other so close that they are neither hydrogen nor oxygen, nor hydrogen *plus* oxygen, but water.

Hitherto, I have said what I believe to be true. Now, I am going to say what I believe to be false. I pray you, therefore, to give me your most careful attention.

When we strike a match, there is a splutter and a flare, which are the atoms of the match and of the atmosphere performing a new sort of dance.

Nothing is added to what was already there; no fresh elements or forces arrive on the gay scene. The atoms are the explosion, and the explosion is the atoms. They hurry up, they change step, they exchange partners: that is all. Before we struck the match, they were dancing, as it were, the second figure of the Lancers; now, they are dancing the third figure, pulling and pushing in that hilarious fashion which is called Kitchen-Lancers: that is all. Even so it is, with consciousness. When something strikes us, there is a splutter and a flare, which are the atoms of our cerebral cells performing, in the crowded ball-room of the brain, a new sort of dance; and that is all. That dance is consciousness, and consciousness is that dance. Consciousness is neither the music which accompanies the dance, nor the reaction which follows the dance: it is the dance, it is atoms in motion. Of course, to dance this particular figure, the atoms must be accustomed to dancing, and there must be enough of them to make up a set, so many ladies and so many gentlemen: and then they can dance till they are tired, and that dance is consciousness. But, we know, it is possible to dance less than sixteen: indeed, a child will dance all alone, without so much as a barrel-organ. Even so it is, with consciousness. In its simplest form, consciousness may be observed even in very humble structures. As, by putting a penny in the slot, we obtain, if the automatic machine be going, a measured

projection of chocolate or of scent, or of two foreign bodies called cigarettes, or an electric current, or the exhibition of a moving picture, or the liberation of a balance, so, from the amoeba, if it be going, we get something out, some faint consciousness, a mere glimmer; still, it is the real article, what there is of it. When we stand in the presence of nobler creatures, such as the oyster, we see movements more definitely purposive; and begin to feel fairly sure that the sun of consciousness has risen. We are for a time puzzled, because the oyster has several centres set apart, and far apart, for consciousness; and it is hard to see how an oyster can be conscious in three or four places at once: and this difficulty is not diminished, but rather is increased, when we contemplate the earth-worm, which is a sort of common lodging-house of consciousness, with a double row of cubicles right and left all the way up. But, when we come to the frog, we know where we are: for we can see at a glance that the cerebral hemispheres must be conscious of the rest of the frog, and that the rest of the frog cannot be conscious of the cerebral hemispheres. Here, at or about this level of life, we find special organs, brains, so complex that they must of necessity be conscious. But of what are they conscious? Is it of themselves, of their own atomic motion, their own chemical changes? Not a bit of it: they are conscious of sensations, dim pleasures and pains, heat and cold,

light and darkness, taste and smell. They feel, they perceive. From this point onward, it is easy to observe the development of consciousness; the brain, as we ascend the scale of life, beginning to divide its experiences into self and not-self. At first, it was conscious: at last, it is self-conscious. Henceforth, it remembers, imagines, thinks, and wills, or thinks that it wills. It reads and writes, pursues the fine arts, invents God, takes an active interest in politics, and, if it be lodged in a male skull, has a vote. Behold, Gentlemen, yourselves: you who are so highly differentiated brains that you can understand anything, even the false doctrine which I have here declared to you. For I no more believe that my brain is self-conscious than I believe that two and two make five. All the same, it was a fair caricature of the random talk which calls itself Psychology.

III

Let us start again, at the right end of creation, at ourselves. If we desire to find the Principles of Psychology, it seems not amiss that we should first look for them there, where Psyche and Logos are most in evidence. Besides, we know more of ourselves than of the lower animals.

Let us bring Science to bear on our environment. There cannot be any harm in doing that. Here, at this moment, I still reading this essay to you, and

you, it may be, still listening to me, where are we? This Common-room, its colour, light, and resonance, its temperature, and the smell of tobacco, and the vision of your presence — What, in the name of Science, are all these facts? A mild shock passes through me, as I remind myself that they are diverse lengths and velocities of waves of air or of ether. The tint of the walls, the pattern of the carpet, the warmth of the fire, the sound of my voice, the fragrance of your smoking, the sight of your faces, all are waves, of which I know nothing, agitating an invisible something, of which I know less than nothing. Colour is so many waves a second, heat so many more, sound so many more. Neither do I find in the furniture and upholstery, or in the hardness of this desk in front of me, or in the resistance of the ground under my feet, or in the muscular sense of my limbs, or in the pressure of the glasses across my nose, any other sort of environment than that which I find in colour, warmth, and sound. In brief, this room is the sum of our sensations; and our sensations are waves from the material world impinging on our sensory nerve-endings: and the material world is a permanent possibility of consciousness. That is the teaching of Science. When we take our sensory nerve-endings home with us, what is left of this room? The answer seems to be, that nothing is left but a permanent possibility of consciousness, impinging

on nothing. This, I feel sure, is the only kind of room in which Science permits us to hold our meetings.

But consider what happens to these waves. They strain through our sensory nerve-endings like water through a sieve, rush up our nerves, attain their appointed places in our cerebral hemispheres, and there they set our atoms dancing. But, whatever they do, they are still waves: and, when they stop moving, are still a sort of bottled motion. Once a wave, always a wave; that is the law of the conservation of energy: and a wave can no more be a sensation than a fiddle can be a tune. They cannot translate themselves: it is we who do that for them. What are they, apart from us? A tree is not green, unless we see it; a man playing a trombone makes no noise, unless we are there; there is neither taste nor smell in our food, unless it comes our way; and a brick wall is not hard, unless we hit our heads against it. If I prick my finger with a needle, the pain is in me, not in the needle: if I wear a grey coat, the grey is in me, not in the coat: and if I hear a motor hooting, the hoot is in me, not in the motor.

From these elementary facts, which are the commonplaces of Science, we come at last toward the Principles of Psychology. No, we do not: we only come within ear-shot of a stand-up fight between two irreconcileable modes of thought.

Over chemistry, geology, botany, physiology, a man cannot go wrong. In these Complete Sciences there is no choice of principles. There cannot be two mental images of the earth: there cannot be two mental images of living matter. But there are two mental images of Psyche, two conflicting modes of thought, each in arms against the other: and we must choose between them, for we cannot have it both ways. Psyche is, or Psyche is not: we must choose, and our choice is a serious business for us, and for those who take their cue from us. It is said that in Paris, all through the Reign of Terror, there were stupid people, in the quiet parts of the city, who never heard the tumbrils on their way to the guillotine, never knew that anything more was happening than the usual discontent, the usual mob-oratory. If that be so, they have their parallel to-day in the stupid people who never hear the tumbrils of Experimental Psychology, escorting Psyche on her way to be explained away.

IV

That school of Psychology which bears, 'mid snow and ice, a banner with this strange device, *Psyche is not*, offers to provide us with a ready-made mental image of self-conscious matter. The opposite school offers us, to my thinking, a pleasanter image; which is indeed that original Psyche in which we all

believed when we were children. Give me leave to commend this pleasanter image to you, not in the name of tradition or sentiment, but in the name of logic and common-sense.

Take for granted the primary miracle, the translation of waves into sensations. So easy, to say that. Still, assume it: assume that we have got past that miracle, and remain competent judges of what comes next. What have we gained, and where do we stand? We have got no further, we have gained nothing. A chaos of sensations has replaced a chaos of waves; but that does not help us toward the construction of the world in which we live. We have substituted chaos for chaos, and there we stop. If this world be a world of sensations, it is all up with Psyche, and we must swear allegiance to them who deny her existence.

But we live, not by sensations, but by experiences: not in chaos, but in space and time. I dare not philosophize about space and time. I am inclined to the transcendental doctrine, that they are in some sense antecedent to experience and independent of sensation. Psychology says that the baby begins without them, and makes them up as it goes along; but I cannot see how, without them, it can begin to go along, or out of what it can make them up. Our experiences cannot report themselves as in space and time; for they cannot report themselves at all, till space and time are there for them. One

might, perhaps, have a simple sensation of all red, or all blue; but one cannot have a sensation of blue and red side by side, because neither can report itself as side by side with the other. Blue and red side by side are not a sensation, but an experience; and the more you try to imagine a baby apart from its universe, or a universe apart from its baby, the less you can. Really, we know very little about the baby. Professor James, for instance, who is like Socrates for simplicity of style, says:

> The Object which the numerous inpouring currents of the baby bring to his consciousness is one big blooming buzzing Confusion. That confusion is the baby's universe. . . .

If that was indeed my universe once, then glory be to Psyche, for making it what it is now. I cannot believe, as I look at my present orderly and beautiful universe, that I am a succession of states of consciousness, or a stream, or anything of the kind. How a stream of states of consciousness can be conscious of itself, conscious that it is neither a stream nor a state, when all the time it is a state of a stream, and therefore is not a stream of states, yet is a stream, and therefore is nothing at all, yet is conscious of streaming, and therefore must be something — how all this can mean anything, let them decide, to whom Psyche means nothing. Here is that which is neither matter in motion, nor sensations in chaos, nor states in succession. It lives on experiences, which it judges,

places, times, connects, compares, and remembers. It abides in a flux of objects, all of which it has, none of which it is. Out of waves, it creates sensations; out of sensations, experiences; out of experiences, its proper life. Yet these achievements are trivial, compared to its more active work. For it has a will of its own. In a world which is all made of results, it still manages, somehow, to be a cause. It is permanent, real, non-material: I never could see why everything should have to be made of matter to be real.

But the animals, the lower animals? Are we not bound to widen our conception of Psyche till it includes all sentient life? In the presence of the lower animals, what becomes of all that I have been saying?

I will try to be perfectly honest here. Ourselves, we can, in some measure, understand. The moment we leave ourselves, all understanding begins to fail; and inch by inch, as we go back down the scale of life, the darkness gets more impenetrable. The inner lives of animals are one of Nature's ultimate secrets. We can hardly guess at them, even at those which are likest to us: we cannot imagine the final reason why they and we are herded together on this planet. Well, we must be guided by what we can see. I must choose, it seems, between two schools of thought. One, which explains me in terms of the lower animals, explains me away,

leaving nothing but my cerebral hemispheres. The other, explaining me as I think that I deserve to be explained, evades the mystery of the lower animals. I shall certainly die before these two schools are reconciled. Meanwhile, I choose that school which gives the best explanation of me: because I am able to square its teaching with my knowledge of myself.

In defence of my choice, I say that Science is just as ignorant as I am of the inner lives of the lower animals. You, who are young men of science, I pray you to imagine that our meeting is over and we have gone home, we and our sensory nerve-endings. It is midnight: this room has relapsed to a permanent possibility of consciousness, a fact which is hardly more definite than a dream. Suddenly, into this abstract environment, enter, by chance, a mouse and a blackbeetle. What do they make of it all? How does it strike them? What is it, to be a blackbeetle? When a blackbeetle enters into a room, in what sense, if in any, does the room enter into the blackbeetle? Go to Science, and ask her these questions; and she will confess that she has not the ghost of a notion how to answer them. Ask yourselves what you mean by the consciousness of a mouse: and you will find that you do not know what you mean. Nor will men a thousand years hence be any nearer to that knowledge.

I am sorry: I began with an essay, and here

I am with a creed. I believe in the reality of myself, and in the freedom of my will: and I believe that we, addressing ourselves to the universe, are as real as the universe, addressing itself to us. But I cannot even begin to try to guess which of the lower animals are run, as we are, on spiritual lines. If I look down a list of the Vertebrata, beginning with Man and ending with the Amphioxus, I only see, long before I get near the Amphioxus, the gradual blotting-out and final extinction of all that is most sure and most familiar to me in Man: and then come the Invertebrata. I believe that there is a final cause of the lower animals, wholly independent of the fact that they are useful, nourishing, instructive, or amusing to us: but that is a matter of faith, whereas my belief in myself is a matter of knowledge. Well, I must go by what I know. Here, not in blind guesses and vague talk about the lower animals, but in the clear sense that I am I, here, in myself, and in myself at my best, I hope to find the Principles of Psychology. We cannot understand, we cannot explain, the anthropoid apes. Still, that is no reason why the anthropoid apes should explain us. I find no logic in the fashionable phrases about streams of states of consciousness: I stick to the old belief, *I am that I am*, which is a comfortable doctrine, and more than comfortable, for it does not outrage the rules of logic.

V

The faults of Psychology, her want of principles, her neglect of logic, make her useless in practical life. She thinks that she is very useful, or will be some day; she pretends to understand us, our motives, habits, passions, acts, and imaginings: she will interpret us to ourselves. Let us consider her offer to superintend our conduct and our work.

What has she to do with our conduct? The influences which determine conduct are not in text-books, but in the home, the school, religion, competition, and the policeman: and the application of Psychology to individual conduct is like the application of an aseptic dressing to Central Africa. From the nursery to the grave, I look backward and forward: my father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances, masters and teachers — how did Psychology help them to help me? Which of us owes thanks to her for the good in him? Of all her talk about conduct, not a word is original, not one: it is all cribbed, and was old already, ages before her birth, and was enforced and accepted in every country of the civilized world. If we could strip her of her borrowed plumage, she would be left without ethics enough to make her decent.

But, like all of us in time of present failure, she promises to do great things in the future, when she is really grown up. There is to be a millennium.

The days will come, when laws shall be made on psychological principles, and men and women shall be mated, and children mothered by the State, and evils abolished, and everybody shall be just like everybody else, all on psychological principles. But these days will not come till the principles are ready for them, which now are conspicuous by their absence. Meanwhile, Edwin and Angelina will fall in love in the old style, without awaiting instructions from Psychology; and the world in general will no more ask the advice of Psychology in matters of conduct than it would ask the gentlemen at Greenwich Observatory to stop the next earthquake. Her promises are magnificent: but what is the use of them?

Her proper line is the abnormal. She has carefully studied exceptions to rules, has dissected the twilight, has made some discoveries, and will make more. Psychical Research is full of discoveries. I believe in hypnotism, I believe in telepathy, I believe that Psyche may call to Psyche, and be heard. Only, from the point of view of this essay, I have three remarks to make on Psychical Research.

(1) We mean by it, mostly, a patient, critical, dispassionate enquiry into stories of ghosts, haunted houses, premonitions, thought-transference, and so forth. But I would rather, here, be passionate than dispassionate. The enquiry touches me too

nearly; Psyche is on her trial; it is a matter of her life or death. I do not see the good of researching into Psyche without believing in her. If a man believes that she is a succession of states of consciousness, without anybody there to be conscious that these states are successive, his researches will be as vague — it is an old simile — as a blind man looking in a dark room for a black hat that is not in the room. I believe that Psyche may call to Psyche: but I do not believe that a succession, which is a word, not a thing, can call to another succession, or do anything, or be anything. I could as well imagine two calling to two, begging it to come and make four.

(2) Psychical Research, in the wider sense of its name, includes Experimental Psychology. So far as I can understand these experiments, they are Physiology: they use the whole body as a gigantic nerve-muscle preparation. That is not Psychology, but Physiology: it is the method which you follow in a case of paralysis. Say that you suspect some loss of power in one arm; *Squeeze my finger*, you say to the patient; you test his muscles, reflexes, appreciations of touch and of warmth, and so forth. But that is not Psychology. Neither is it Psychology, to study how long it takes a man to spot a word flashed before his eyes, or to respond to a signal: it is merely a parlour-game of Physiology.

(3) Abnormal people, spiritual freaks, are what Psychology loves. It does not appear that she does much for them, but she demonstrates them, plays tunes on them. One is clairvoyante, another has fits, another has two personalities, and I have read of a distressed lady who had five; another is a daemoniac Frenchwoman, Madame A or Mlle. X, a most untrustworthy person. Psychology plays with these unhappy people, as a bad child pulls the wings off a fly, to see what it will do without them. Of course, these cases are, more or less, real: but they are so rare, that we learn from them next to nothing.

But what use is she to us in practice? Take, for example, cases of drink, and cases of insanity. We class them as organic diseases of the brain, and so they are: and we look for help, in their treatment, to the medical sciences. But we never look to Psychology: except that hypnotism is a method of treatment. And hypnotism, surely, is what we must call a spiritual treatment; it falls in with the commonplace influences of one will over another, which are spiritual influences. *Therein the patient must minister to himself.* Sixpennorth of drugs to get at his brain, and six months of spiritual treatment to get at him: that is the way of practice. I do not say that the spiritual treatment is our business: it is the business of the patient's friends. But I do say that the record of the dealings of

Psychology with Psyche in trouble is a record of words, not of deeds. To hear her talking of these diseases, is to be reminded of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

I seem to have come to this lame conclusion, that our chief use of Psychology is to satisfy the examiners in Psychology. Also, she makes us think. But, when she says that we are streams of states of consciousness, then she is talking nonsense, not Science.

A GOOD EXAMPLE

It seems a pity, that the good example of Ambroise Paré is almost forgotten. He was born in 1510, of working people, in a village: he went early into apprenticeship, and thus escaped the deadening influences of the University of Paris — *I make no claim to have read Galen either in Greek or in Latin: for it did not please God to be so gracious to my youth that it should be instructed either in the one tongue or in the other.* For three years, or it may be four, he held a resident appointment at the Hôtel Dieu. For more than twenty years, off and on, he was an Army-surgeon, with a foothold in Paris. He had a great practice, wrote, lectured, upheld the rights of the surgeons against the physicians, held many Court appointments, and was twice married. He attended Henri II., François II., Charles IX., Henri III., François duc de Guise, and Coligny; knew Vesalius, Catherine de Medicis, Mary Stuart, and all Paris; was on the side of the Huguenots: and outlived, at eighty, the siege of Paris by Henri IV.

From Malgaigne and le Paulmier, we may learn all about his life. In his books, we possess him, his affairs, habits, and opinions; and may almost recognize his very air, and the sound of his voice. The record of his adventures with the Army, his *Voyages faicts en divers Lieulx*, is fine reading. Here is one who can praise without offence his own performances, and chronicle with proper pride his own words, and score off a fool, and relish his meat and drink: a shrewd, happy, confident, business-like gentleman, not wholly free, in a vain and cruel age, from vanity, nor incapable of cruelty, but steadily compassionate, humble, wise, and honourable: and a true lover of his country, his home, and his profession. Everybody reads Boswell and Pepys, but who reads Paré? All his gossip about his patients, and all his good stories of the campaigns, the months of endurance, the moments of terror, the dreadful jobs to be done after an engagement, the brutality of the Spanish soldiers, the rough-and-tumble ways of the French camp, all the tragedy and all the comedy, are shelved in this or that library, and the dust is thick on *Opera Omnia*. We have no time to read of the life of an Army that is three centuries dead; we know only this of Paré, that he used to say, *I dressed him, and God cured him:* and he deserves more recognition than the memory of that one phrase.

Je le pansay et Dieu le guarit: and he rings changes on it, thus:

I dressed him, and God cured him.

My lord, by the grace of God, was cured.

I did him the services of physician, surgeon, apothecary, and cook. I dressed him, to the end of the case, and God cured him.

I returned to Paris, with my gentleman whose leg I had cut off: I dressed him, and God cured him. I sent him home happy with a wooden leg, and he was well satisfied, saying that he had got off cheap.

I reduced and dressed his leg so skilfully that he was free from pain, and slept all night: and in time, thank God, he was cured, and is now in the King's service.

God blessed my work so well, that I sent my patients back to Paris; where I still had to make some incisions in M. de Mansfeld's arm. He was cured, by the grace of God, and made me a handsome present; so I was well content with him, and he with me: as he has shown me since.

Always, this piety was in him: not only in practice, but in daily life. It is true that everybody, in his time, talked religion; but the sincerity of Paré's talk is as clear as crystal. And it is true that he was superstitious; but he was less superstitious than many of his grand patients, and mocked at the fashionable craze for amulets and horoscopes. What nickname, I wonder, had he at the Court? What did the Queen Mother, and the mad Valois line, make of him? Observe him, this uneducated self-made man, standing up, at that Court, for plain living and Huguenot thinking: and the King

himself, on the night of the Massacre, locking him in a room of the Louvre, swearing that it was not reasonable that a man, who was worth a whole world of men, should be murdered.

But consider his works. Sitting here, transcribing *Opera Omnia*, I could fill a book with his good stories and his good cases: but one must suffice, and he who wants more can find them for himself.

M. le Marquis d'Auret, brother of M. le Duc d'Ascot, was a very magnificent young gentleman, twenty years old. He was suffering from a gun-shot wound of the thigh, which had fractured the bone. For seven months he had been lying in misery, at Mons in Hainault, slowly nearing death, and attended by many doctors. The King, at the Duke's request, sent Paré, who was at this time sixty years old, and premier surgeon at the Court. Paré found the young man in a frightful state; as if he had been, for seven months, with a compound fracture of the femur, and diffuse suppuration, under the Christian Science treatment:

> Seeing and considering all these great complications, and the vital powers thus broken down, truly I was very sorry I had come to him, because it seemed to me that there was little hope that he would escape death. All the same, to give him courage and good hope, I told him I would soon set him on his legs, by the grace of God, and the help of his physicians and surgeons.
>
> Having seen him, I went a walk in a garden, and prayed God to show me this grace, that he should recover, and to

bless our hands and our medicaments to cure such a complication of diseases. I turned in my mind what measures I must take to this end. They called me to dinner. I came into the kitchen, and there I saw, taken out of a great pot, half a sheep, a quarter of veal, three great pieces of beef, two fowls, and a very large piece of bacon, with abundance of good herbs. Then I said to myself that the broth of the pot would be full of juices, and very nourishing.

After dinner, we began our consultation, all the physicians and surgeons together, in the presence of M. le Duc d'Ascot and some gentlemen who were with him. I began to say to the surgeons that I was astonished that they had not made incisions in the patient's thigh, seeing that it was all suppurating, and the thick matter in it very fetid and offensive, showing that it had long been pent-up there; and I had found with the probe caries of the bone, and scales of bone already loose. They answered me, Never would he consent to it: indeed, that it was near two months, since they had been able to get leave to put clean sheets on the bed, and that one scarce dared touch the coverlet, so great was his pain. Then I said, To cure him, we must touch something else than the coverlet of his bed. Each said what he thought of the malady of the patient, and, in conclusion, they all held it hopeless. I told them that there was still some hope, because he was young, and God and Nature sometimes do what seems to physicians and surgeons impossible.

Then follows a discourse, of prodigious length. The treatment, he tells the doctors, must include free incisions, fomentations, a clean bed, hot bricks and a hot bottle duly medicated, massage, a dusting powder, a plaster and a pillow for a bed-sore, a refrigerant over the heart, a head-cloth and a forehead cloth and a pomander, an opiate at night, a

generous diet, a moderate allowance of wine: "and, (he adds) we must make artificial rain, pouring water from some high place into a cauldron, that he may hear the sound of it, whereby sleep shall be induced on him." For the fomentations, a decoction of sage, rosemary, thyme, lavender, chamomile, melilot, and red roses boiled in white wine: for a generous diet, raw eggs, plums stewed in wine and sugar, the broth of the great pot, white meat of fowls, partridge-wings, and other roast meats easy to digest, with orange, verjuice, sorrel, and bitter pomegranates: or boiled with good herbs, such as lettuce, parsley, chicory, bugloss, marigold, and the like. This excellent food, and the well-flavoured opiate, and the fragrant blend of roses, lilies, poppies, and camphor on the forehead-cloth, and the good bread, which must be farm-house bread neither too stale nor too new, are all noted with the utmost minuteness. Yet the discourse is mainly on pathology. If he spoke it as he published it, the greater part of the afternoon must have been occupied.

This my discourse was well approved by the physicians and surgeons. The consultation ended, we went back to the patient, and I made three openings in his thigh. . . . Two or three hours later, I got a bed made near his old one, with clean white sheets on it; then a strong man put him into it, and he was thankful to be taken out of his foul, stinking bed. Soon afterward, he asked to sleep; which he did for nearly four hours; and everybody in the house began to feel happy, and especially his brother.

Slowly, the young man recovered; and we have a pleasant picture of his convalescence:

I stopped there about two months, not without seeing many patients, rich and poor, who came to me from three or four leagues round. He gave food and drink to the needy, and commended them all to me, asking me to help them for his sake. I protest that I refused not one, and did for them all that I could, to his great pleasure. Then, when I saw him beginning to get well, I told him that he must have viols and violins, and a buffoon to make him laugh: which he did. In a month, we got him into a chair; and he had himself carried about his garden, and to the door of his château, to watch people passing. The villagers, for two or three leagues round, now that they could see him, came on holidays to sing and dance, a regular crowd of light-hearted country folk, rejoicing in his convalescence, all glad to see him, not without plenty of laughter and plenty of drink. He always gave them a hogshead of beer: and they all drank his health with a will. He was dearly loved, both by the nobility and by the common people, as for his generosity, so for his handsome face and his courtesy, with a kind look and a gracious word for everybody. In six weeks he began to stand a little on crutches, and to put on flesh and get a good natural colour. He wanted to go to Beaumont, his brother's place: and was taken thither in a carrying-chair, by eight men at a time. And the peasants, in the villages through which we passed, when they knew it was M. le Marquis, fought who should carry him, and insisted that we should drink with them: and it was only beer, but they would have given us hippocras, if there had been any. And all were glad to see him, and prayed God for him.

There is no room here to describe the life at Beaumont, the feasting, the fencing-matches, the

fifty guests met to amuse the patient; and how they tried, more shame to them, by all drinking to Paré, to make him drunk, and failed, for he would drink no more than his usual allowance; and how, at last, well-thanked, well-paid, he got away home. We do not now record cases in this lively style:

> I took my leave of the Duchess, who drew a diamond from her finger, and gave it to me, in her gratitude for my good care of her brother-in-law: and the diamond was worth fifty crowns. I was two days and a half, on my way home, seeing the city of Antwerp; where certain merchants begged that they might have the honour of giving us a dinner or a supper: it was, Who should have us? And they were all truly glad to hear how M. d'Auret was doing, and made more of me than I asked. I forgot to say that the Spaniards have since ruined and demolished his Château d'Auret, and have sacked, plundered, and burned all the houses and villages belonging to him, because he would not be of their wicked party in their assassination and ruin of the Netherlands.

Observe, all you who are students, that the patient had six doctors, but no nurse, and that Paré understood the whole art of nursing; and so ought you. Even Charles IX., dying of phthisis, and haunted by the ghosts of the Massacre, had no nurse, save the old lady who had looked after him when he was a child: and she, as we happen to know, composed herself to sleep while he was dying. Observe, also, the sequence of Paré's thoughts: the shock of the first sight of the case, the bold

encouragement of the patient, the meditation in the open air, the shrewd glance at the great pot, the authority in consultation, the readiness to operate. Observe, especially, his glorious common-sense and his scrupulous attention to every detail of the treatment.

For his home-life, see le Paulmier. The start in practice in Paris, with two little rooms on a ground-floor, handy to the fashionable duelling-field: the poverty of his first marriage, the coming of prosperity, the move into a good house, the purchase of adjoining houses, and of a cottage at Meudon: the affluent air of his second marriage, and what important personages were sponsors for the grandchildren, and how the recurrent names of old friends, as witnesses, enliven marriage-settlements and leases: and what family affection was in the home, and how the little church round the corner, Saint André des Arcs, baptized, married, and buried them all — you find it all made out and put in order. The evidence is complete, that Paré was happy in his family and in his friends, a good business man, charitable, kindly, a bit vain, a bit old-fashioned, fond of life, glad to be a loyal, hard-working, and well-beloved citizen. If now, at the corner of the Rue de l'Hirondelle, close to the Quai des Augustins, you could come across the jocund ghost of the Maison des Trois Maures, its windows would be radiant with light, and you would hear laughter and friendly

voices, and would smell a good dinner, if dinners have ghosts: but you would hear no solemn or pedantic talk, no Greek and Latin. This ghostly house, when it was alive, was the home of a man self-made and self-taught, who won his everlasting name, without help of birth, education, privilege, or money, by hard work, by wholesome self-assurance, by spiritual goodness, and by strict attention to business.

We have difficulties which did not come to him. Incessant examinations, books, and schedules weigh on our Hospital life: then comes practice, and the stress of competition, so severe that many of us fail, or partly fail, do what we will. To him, we think, success was easier. He just was apprentice, House-surgeon, barber-surgeon, Army-surgeon, and eminent surgeon, each in due time: he had elbow-room, he was free, he was lucky.

It is true that Paré, at the very beginning of his time in the Army, even before he was qualified, had a grand bit of luck. His famous discovery, that boiling oil is not good for gunshot wounds, was ascribed, even by him, to chance. It happened at Suse, a little place near Mont Cenis, in 1537:

> The enemy within the castle, seeing our men come on them with great fury, did all that they could to defend themselves, and killed and wounded many of our soldiers with pikes, arquebuses, and stones: whereby the surgeons had all

their work cut out for them. Now I was at this time a fresh-water soldier; I had not yet seen gunshot wounds at the first dressing. I had read in John de Vigo, book one, *Of Wounds in General*, chapter eight, that wounds made by fire-arms partake of venenosity, by reason of the gunpowder; and for their cure he bids you cauterize them with oil of elders, scalding hot, mixed with a little treacle. And to make no mistake, before I would use the said oil, knowing that it was to bring great pain to the patient, I asked first, before I applied it, what the other surgeons used for a first dressing; which was, to put the said oil, boiling well, into the wounds, with tents and setons: wherefore I took courage to do as they did. At last, my oil ran short; and I was compelled, instead of it, to apply a digestive made of yolks of eggs, oil of roses, and turpentine. In the night, I could not sleep in quiet, fearing some default in the not cauterizing, lest I should find those, to whom I had not applied the said oil, dead from the poison of their wounds; which made me rise very early to visit them: where, beyond my expectation, I found that they to whom I had applied my digestive had suffered but little pain, and their wounds without inflammation or swelling, having rested fairly well that night. The others, to whom the boiling oil was applied, I found feverish, with great pain, and swelling round the edges of their wounds. Then I resolved nevermore to burn thus cruelly poor men with gunshot wounds.

When I was at Turin, I found a surgeon famed above all the rest for his treatment of gunshot wounds; into whose favour I found a way to insinuate myself, that I might have the recipe of his balm, as he called it, wherewith he dressed these wounds. And he made me pay my court to him for two years, before I could possibly get the recipe out of him. In the end, thanks to my gifts and presents, he gave it to me, which was this, to boil down, in oil of lilies, young whelps just born, and earthworms prepared with Venice tur-

pentine. Then was I joyful, and my heart made glad, that I had learned his remedy, which was like that which I had obtained by chance.

See how I learned to treat gunshot wounds: not out of books.

His other great discovery, the use of the ligature, instead of the red-hot irons, to stop the bleeding of an amputation, was made about 1552: *which it pleased God to teach me, without I had ever seen it done in any case, no, nor read of it.* Prometheus, who brought fire to suffering mortals, is not to be compared with this good surgeon, who took it away from them.

Once we begin to count his gifts, it is a long list. He had a keen, orderly, business-like mind, intensely practical; a pleasant cleanness of talk on sexual subjects; perfect contentment with his place in society; love of home, pride in his work, belief in himself, and unaffected sympathy with his patients. These gifts, and more, were in him, and kept him young.

But all praise of him is poor stuff, beside that one picture of him which is in the Memoirs of Pierre de l'Estoile. In 1590, after the battle of Ivry, came the siege of Paris. It began in May; by the end of August, the poor were dying like flies, and the dead were lying in the streets: the agony of that siege, and the fury of the League, under the iron rule of the Archbishop of Lyon, belong to history. Paré, eighty years old, and

with only four months to live, was still afoot in the hot streets, among the starving crowd. His practice, we may be sure, had left him, and gone to Antoine Portail and other surgeons. His grand patients, Catherine de Medicis, the King, the Guises, were dead. Suddenly, close to his own house, he came face to face with the Archbishop of Lyon: either by chance, or of set purpose to speak his mind to him. "I remember," says Pierre de l'Estoile, "about eight or ten days, at most, before the siege was raised, Monseigneur the Archbishop, crossing over the end of the Pont Saint Michel, when he found his way blocked by a crowd of those who were dying of hunger, they cried out to him, begging for bread or for death: he not knowing what to say to them, Master Ambroise Paré meets him, and says to him in a loud voice, 'Monseigneur, this poor people, whom you see here round you, are dying of the cruel pains of famine, and they ask pity of you. For God's sake, Monsieur, have pity on them, if you want God to have pity on you: think a little of the high place to which God has called you, and how the cry of these poor men and women goes up to Heaven, and is a warning sent you by God, to remind you of the duties of your office, for which you have to answer to Him. Therefore, by that office, and by the power which we all know that you have, bring about peace for

us, and give us a way of living: for the poor can no longer help themselves. Do you not see that all Paris is dying, thanks to the wicked men who wish to prevent peace, which is the special work of God? Set all your strength against them, Monsieur: take in hand the cause of this poor afflicted people, and God will bless you and repay you.' Monseigneur the Archbishop said nothing, or next to nothing: only, he was patient to hear him to the end and not interrupt him, which was not his usual way. And, afterward, he said that the good man had fairly astonished him; and again, that this was not the sort of politics he was used to hear talked; and that Master Ambroise Paré had waked him up, and made him think of many things." Four months later, Pierre de l'Estoile writes: "On Thursday, December the twentieth, the Eve of Saint Thomas, at Paris, in his own house, died Master Ambroise Paré, the King's surgeon, eighty years old; a learned man, and the chief of all surgeons; who, even against the times, all his life talked and spoke openly for peace and for the people: which made him as much beloved by the good as he was opposed and hated by the wicked."

PRACTICE

The casket scenes in the Merchant of Venice are exquisite poetry wasted on an episode so foolish that I wonder nobody has taken it for a musical comedy: and in my imagination I see the posters of that new piece, and read, on the mind's hoardings, its ugly name.

The challenge of the caskets was devised by Portia's father, on his death-bed, under divine inspiration. She knows, but must not say, which of them contains her portrait. I wish that she did not know: I should like to watch the perplexity of her suitors mirrored in her face. Each suitor was challenged on the very threshold of courtship; and a strange and most unreasonable oath was exacted from him:

Arragon. I am enjoined by oath to observe three things.
First, never to unfold to any one,
Which casket 'twas I chose: next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage: lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

So it is, with us doctors, as with Portia's suitors. Practice, when we come courting her, challenges us. She could tell us, if she would, which casket to choose; but she will not. Even when Bassanio comes, she will not tell him: is it likely that she would tell us, who thrust ourselves, unasked and unwelcome, into her house? Belmont is full of us, and she is tired of us all.

It is true that we, if we fail, are free to tell other suitors how we chose, and so we do: but they will not believe us. It is true, also, that we are free to follow another love, if we fail to find Practice: but every profession, nowadays, challenges its suitors.

Consider, Gentlemen — thus I shall begin my next Address to Students at the Opening of the Winter Session — how it was that the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon failed, and Bassanio succeeded, in the localization of fair Portia's counterfeit: and let me recall to you the inscriptions on the caskets:

Gold.

Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.

Silver.

Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.

Lead.

Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath.

Morocco, one of the greatest of Shakspeare's lesser characters, is, of course, Othello's understudy. He has Othello's dignity, authority, and faith. He

brings the air of the desert along with him: it hardly crosses his mind that he is in Italy, among a people fond of thimble-rigging tricks. In all the world, this exalted spirit sees only Portia and himself. But he cannot keep himself out of the line of his own vision. That is why he, alone of the three suitors, takes the trouble to read the caskets twice: not only from fear of losing Portia, but from fear of committing himself. That, also, is why he rejects the leaden casket: not only because it is unworthy of her, but because it is unworthy of him, whose *golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.* Over the silver casket, he stays long, still contemplating himself, weighing his value with an even hand, and allowing it full weight:

> As much as I deserve? Why, that's the lady:
> I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
> In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
> But, more than these, in love I do deserve.
> What if I strayed no further, but chose here?

But he reads again the saying graved in gold; and then and there he forgets at last himself, and out of him with a rush comes a love-song of such fire as would never do for a musical comedy, and he calls in a fury of impatience for the key, and open flies the casket, and *Oh Hell, What have we here?* a skull, with a scroll poked into one of its orbits. The moral, for us doctors, is twofold. First, that birth and fortune, graces, and qualities

of breeding, do not ensure Practice. Next, that the imaginative man is apt to idealize Practice, and to be in love with his own vision of her descending out of Heaven. His golden mind sets up a golden image, and worships it, and will not stoop to shows of dross. But Practice, though she is of heavenly origin, is a human business, competitive, and overcrowded ; which Heaven is not.

Arragon, compared with Morocco, is a poor creature, with no care for anybody but himself. He hardly notices the leaden casket, simply fails to see why it is there ; and he refuses the gold for this foolish reason, that most people, being commonplace, would choose it, and he is sure that he is not commonplace. No, what he deserves is good enough for him, for whom nothing is too good. Therewith he opens the silver casket, and loses alike Portia and his temper : for he finds in it a sort of comic valentine, the portrait of a blinking idiot, with a rude set of verses. I have profound sympathy with Arragon. First, because Portia despises and mocks him. Next, because, at this or that theatre, he is not acted at all, but simply omitted : that is what they call the acting version of the play. Finally, and especially, because I approve his choice. I deplore its motive ; none the less, I admire its principle.

Bassanio, after a beautiful soliloquy on the deceitfulness of appearances, goes straight for the

right casket. Oh, I have no patience with him. Shakspeare made him, therefore let him pass for a man: but look at him. Bassanio, to be moralizing over the deceitfulness of appearances, who has just borrowed three thousand ducats for clothes and finery, to outshine Morocco and Arragon. It is for Portia's money — *how to get clear of all the debts I owe* — that he goes to Belmont. He is so vain, that he tells of her evident admiration of him; so careful of appearances, that he warns Gratiano not to disgrace him by being vulgar when they get there: and it was a most necessary warning. Let us be glad, that Bassanio never really happened. All the same, he is the successful suitor: and the moral is, that Practice admires him who wants her money. Begin poor, be in urgent need of capital, borrow of a friend, hold up your head, take courage, make opportunity, face rivalry: so shall you find Practice, who already is in love with you, and win her, and make her pay your debts.

But here my simile, like Portia's father, is on its death-bed. For there is this difference between her and Practice, that she set the caskets side by side, but Practice sets them one inside another. Lead, gold, silver; that is the order, from without inwards, as the anatomists say: and we must open, for her sake, not one but all. First, the leaden casket, the venture of faith: *Who chooseth me, must*

give and hazard all he hath. Before you go further, count the cost of this first commandment. You make the venture, raise the leaden lid, read the gold: *Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.* Why, that is Practice; all the world desires her: from the four corners of the earth they come, to kiss this shrine. Very well, young man: if you insist on quoting Morocco's lines, you must imitate his action. Come, open this second casket. What is inside it? Oh, you know that, as well as any of us; quick, the key, and up with the golden lid. What have we here? A third casket: *Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.* This is the last of them: and here, truly, is divine inspiration, and you must say Amen to it. You, when the time comes for you to look back at the work of your life, will you care to think of it more than this, that you got what you deserved? Take the last of the keys, and turn it. There is the lady, an excellent likeness. Pray, what do you think of her?

The portrait of Practice, as you bring it, in hands that shake a little, to the light, will I fear, disappoint you, at first. A middle-aged, strong-featured woman, with a lined forehead and pale cheeks; for she is up at all hours, and seldom allows herself a holiday. Her hands are rough; for she works hard, and is glad of employment. Her hair, touched with grey, is packed away

under a nurse's cap; her dress is of some dark, serviceable stuff, and of no emphatic fashion: and she wears no ornaments. Tired, quiet eyes: a nose and a chin more masculine than feminine: a mouth rather large, but well shaped, and well under control: and, alas, a scar, from an old hurt that she got at her work. You poor young man, you expected to find her looking like Lady Hamilton by Romney. But what more can you see, now that you have studied, not without a sinking of your heart, this portrait of your life's partner? Why, nothing: portraits are not prophets. That is love's most urgent need, a portrait of twenty years hence. For the present, be thankful, you who are a gentleman, that Practice is a lady, a born lady, you can see that at a glance: with a good, sensitive, kind, clever face, absolutely free from the very least hint of vulgarity. Her eyes look straight into yours, and seem to be reading you more profoundly than you can yet read her: and her lips, too severe for immediate kissing, give promise of steady, gentle sympathy, and of the very best sort of laughter. Oh, a lady, a perfect lady: and I, for my part, prefer her to Portia, whose jests are of the stage, and her charms require very careful acting.

Now that you have seen the face of Practice, you will be wanting to know what is her fortune. Let us consider, what reward we have of her.

To make a beginning, let it be granted, that our reward is paid to us part in money and part in kind. We cannot keep separate, as it were in two ledgers, these two incomes: nor can we say exactly, at any time, how much we are worth. Our lives are invested in the goodwill of friends, in the confidence of patients, in the approval of the brethren; and in our Hospital record, and in our intention of sticking to work. All these and the like securities are but other names for ourselves. What we are, that we make: some of it, but not much, in money, and the rest of it in kind.

Not all of us get as much as we deserve: there are exceptions to the rule. Among them, are the many who die young, or in middle-age; and they who have taken, and cannot leave, a line of practice not in accordance with Nature's plan for them; and the ill-starred Lydgates whom a discordant home-life crosses and keeps back; and they who lose health, or savings, or good appointments, through no fault of theirs, and are unable to repair that loss. The list of exceptions is of great length: still, it is not long enough, and in a world run by Providence no possible list could be long enough, to annul the rule, that we get what we deserve.

But, if money were all that we made by practice, we are far from our deserts. Many of us, gentlemen by birth, experts by education, earn little, even

with hard work; and might covet the takings of the public-house, which provides such a multitude of patients for the Hospital, without subscribing to its funds. I wish the present Government would arrange for 10 *per cent.* of the profits of the public-house to go direct to the Hospital, as a slight return for repairs executed on customers.*

* To write, in one sentence, of doctors and of Hospitals is to be reminded of a certain opposition of their interests. It is no wonder, that we find fault, now and again, with our Hospitals, even with our Hospitals, that they admit, or treat as out-patients, so many people who could afford to pay a practitioner. But this grievance is light, in comparison with the advantages which we obtain from their teaching, and from the use of their services. Besides, they do try to check abuse: but all detective methods are somewhat uncongenial to their kind old hearts. Of all such methods of scrutiny, the worst, I think, is the enforcement of Hospital letters. That a disabled labourer should have to apply to the tradesmen in the neighbourhood for a printed form, telling the Hospital what it can see at a glance, here is indeed an abuse of Hospital charity: that a tradesman will not subscribe to his local Hospital unless he gets a sheaf of letters for his guinea, here is indeed an uncharitable opinion. The authorities of the King's Fund ought to make a bonfire, on His Majesty's birthday, of Hospital letters. They assume the vanity of the small subscriber, and play up to it; they worry and alienate the poor; and the best thing to do with them is to light your pipe with them. They are a survival of the bad Georgian way of *patronizing the unfortunate*. Nothing can justify them, unless it were the existence of people who would not subscribe even to the maintenance of Heaven, without an Annual Report and the right to recommend four souls for immediate admission if found suitable cases.

Of our professional earnings, what we make in money, I have nothing to say; partly because they vary so widely, and partly because I do not know on what principles they are determined. If Medicine is a trade, why should the doctor so often work for nothing? If it is an art, what works of art does he produce? None, says Claude Bernard, *Le médecin artiste ne crée rien:* but surely he is wrong. The doctor, so far from creating nothing, creates life: for he who saves or prolongs life, creates more life. If Miss X is seventy, and the doctor, by an operation, enables her to live till she is seventy-five, he has not prolonged the seventy years, for they were ended before he came; but he has created five brand-new years. If he had not been there, they would not be here: that is creation. He has not lengthened her past, nobody could; he has called into existence her present and her future: and they are she, therefore he has called into existence her. Not that he thinks much of that tremendous act. For he knows that the butcher, the grocer, the milkman, the people who sell blankets and flannel garments, and most of us, in the case of such an old lady, would add the wine-merchant, all take part in the work of creation: and I must not forget the coal-merchant, the baker, the cook, and the housemaid. Miss X, from seventy to seventy-five, is the achievement of a syndicate, and owes her life to all of them. Her

recognition, thus widely diffused, must be spread thin. She cannot take a joint-stock company to her heart, crying *My gallant preservers:* she cannot endow them all. Suppose that she gives the doctor what Paré would call an honourable present and of great value: *To my kind doctor, who under Providence was the means of prolonging my life.* Why should she stop there? The servants, the tradespeople, the very horses which take her for an airing, are they not all, under Providence, creators, *per quos illa facta est?* I begin to see the meaning of that plural in the first chapter of Genesis: it is such a business, *tantae molis*, to create people.

To estimate what may thus be done, take the instance of a Hospital surgeon in charge of forty beds. Allow him six weeks' holiday: and put the average stay of his patients in Hospital at three weeks. That gives him 600 patients a year. Take any ten of them. Of these ten, let us guess that one dies, one is none the better for treatment, and three, being cured of maladies which could not shorten life, gain nothing in length of days. That leaves five patients. Of these five, let us guess that two gain five years, two gain ten years, and one gains thirty years. That gives a gain of sixty years on ten cases, or 3600 years on 600 cases. In twenty years, at that rate, he will have saved 72,000 years of other people's lives. Of course, he cannot alone claim them; many minds and hands are at work

with him. Still, the years are saved; and that, free of charge.

Many and great are the rewards in kind which we have of practice: the world never seems tired of telling us how thankful we ought to be for our blessings. And, truly, we are. The depth and the width of our work, its bewildering diversity, its vivid discoveries, its science, all these make us happy. So does its humanity, so rich in the friendship and the goodwill of our patients. I hesitate to allude to their gratitude, because Modern Thought is inclined to explain away gratitude: still, there it is, and we, not being the least bit like Wordsworth, and seeing many sights that oftener leave us mourning, are very fond of gratitude.

Further, we have this reward of practice, that we are, within ample limits, independent of all forms and ceremonies. So long as we do our work well, nobody cares what we believe, what we look like, or how we vote. Wherever we go, we are taken for granted, and the world neither asks for our passports nor suspects our motives nor doubts our word. We have nothing up our sleeves. Nowhere need the doctor feel, if the phrase may be pardoned, out of it: save that he may be embarrassed by sudden admission inside a sacred circle of hopes and fears all spinning round a case that he has never seen before. We come natural to people; which is more than can be said of every profession.

It is not an honour, to come natural to people; he who does that, travels in very queer company: still, it is a pleasure. Everywhere, from the Smart Set, whatever that may be, to the slums, and we know better than most folk what the slums are, we are understood and welcome. *I'm so glad you are here*, says the grand house, all huddled under the blow which has fallen on it; the house hardly knows itself, the invitation-cards over the mantelpiece have an air of mockery, the sounds of the street are insufferable, the very window-blinds are tugging at their cords to be let down. *I'm so glad you are here*, says the little house in the slums, *Come along quick, doctor, she's awful bad.* Of course, we must not be proud that we are wanted. The cat's-meat man, for instance, is not proud that the cats want him, and come twisting out of every area. Still, if I were he, I should try to be glad of such a welcome. But to be wanted by men and women, to come natural to them in time of trouble, is a very different matter, and may fairly be called a career.

It is said that any doctor who holds a Court appointment enjoys thereby a certain privilege. If he is on his way to the Palace, and his carriage is stopped by the passing of the Household Cavalry, he may in his turn stop them, and drive straight through the little procession. I should love to see that. Imagine the scene, those resplendent

horsemen all held-up by one doctor, like the sun and the moon in the Book of Joshua: see the honest pride of the doctor's coachman, as the glittering line of helmets and cuirasses halts, with a backward shock, like so many coal-trucks. *Cedant arma togae.* The onlookers laugh, and stare: and one or two, as the carriage trundles past them, lift their hats. Here is a true figure of the doctor's life. He goes straight to his work, and is let through to it without delay or hindrance: his business is privileged, his authority admitted, his presence explains itself. The forms and conventions which impede society do not interfere with him, and he can drive right through the middle of them on his way to an urgent case. At once, he comes natural into lives all scared and shaken by some disaster so unexpected that he seems the one natural event in the house. Oh, we have our faults, and may be made to look very funny on the stage or in a novel: but life is not measured that way.

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRACTICE

All of us, while we are students, wonder what we shall make of practice: but some of us forget to wonder what practice will make of us, and how we shall stand its discipline. That the discipline is there, we know; for no work worth doing is without discipline: but we seldom trouble ourselves to anticipate in thought its methods and its purposes. *Of course*, we say, *Things will be slow and uphill at first, but I don't mind that:* and we reckon with confidence on the usual sequence, first the lean years, then success, and at the last a comfortable and honoured old age, with a garden, in a pleasant neighbourhood not too far from London. This forecast does not compel us to see, as we ought, that when we take our work in hand it takes us in hand, and chastises us. Nothing, in practice, is more certain than its use of the scourge; and we need not go outside the day's work to learn obedience. *Talk of the patience of Job*, said a Hospital-nurse, *Job was never on night-duty.* She

had found the discipline of practice; and it had found her.

Consider, first, this instrument of the discipline; that we live under responsibility, and go in fear of making a mistake. In every science and every art, in every business and every trade, mistakes are made: they are a part of all men. But doctors practise their science and their art on life. With that material, a mistake may be irreparable. You, who are now a student, keen over your work, and one of the best men of your year at the Hospital, what will you do when that disaster happens? How long will it wait, before it happens? Indeed, it may happen before you leave the Hospital. Say that you are a House-physician or a House-surgeon, hard-worked, sometimes over-worked, careful, gentle, diligent — oh, let us say, and have done with it, that you have every virtue under Heaven — yet the blow may fall, before the end of your term of office, on some man, woman, or child under your care: fall, before your death, on one or more than one of your patients. Look this fact in the face, now, before it comes into your life. People talk of the Fine Arts: but what art is so fine as Medicine, which works in lives, and cannot correct its proofs, or begin with a sketch, or waste its fabrics, or rehearse its effects, or use a model; and, by a mistake, injures not an image of life, but life? Why, that is just why Medicine is not fine. It

is not the art, but the stuff, which is so fine: we must interfere with that one substance which is above all else in Nature, the one texture, man, infinitely complex, infinitely precious. *We touch Heaven*, it is said, *when we lay our hands on the human body:* and the doctor is bound to dose it, to operate on it. This fear of doing harm, which is called the strain of practice, does not pass with the passing of youth: it is acknowledged by a famous surgeon, in a letter written when he was fifty-six. *What happy hours they were*, he says, of a holiday just over, *in their contrast of carelessness with the care of mind with which, here, one goes from one responsibility to another, and always with the thought that, while meaning to do good, one may, from carelessness or inadvertence, do harm.*

Consider, next, that discipline which we receive from cases which fail, through no fault of ours, yet they fail. The treatment was correct: there was no offence either of omission or of commission. Yet, over such cases, temperament is apt to get the upper hand of reason. Our successful cases, we feel, might belong to anybody: but our unsuccessful cases belong to us. It is true that our leaders achieve successes which belong to them alone: but, to us of the rank and file, the argument seems not merely sentimental, but logical, that, where I succeed, the rest of us would have succeeded; but, where I fail, it is I who

fail, and not the rest of us. I have no doubt, that A would still have recovered, if B, and not I, had been in attendance: but, if A had died, he was not B's patient, but mine. It was very delightful, when A began to get well: but that does not alter the fact that I was not the only letter of the alphabet who could have cured him. Indeed, if it had not been for B's book on the subject, which taught me C's modification of D's method, it is possible that A would not have made such a quick recovery. Besides, his recovery was not all due to me: for he had a good constitution, and the will to get well, and a wonderful power of sleeping, and two nurses: and it was Mrs. A, now I come to think of it, who suggested the champagne. In brief, the success was mine as my thermometer and my stethoscope are mine: everybody has the like of them. And now, when I meet old A, and he says, as he always does, like a clock striking, *My dear fellow, by God's mercy, you saved my life*, I think of God's mercy as a thousand incalculable forces all meeting at A; and am sure, that any doctor could have done that.

Later, I attended A's son, who died. Nothing could have saved him, I was not at fault, I got another man to see him with me, the treatment was all right, it was a hopeless case from the beginning. All the same, the failure, the dismal

going-out of young A, the disappointment, were mine: it was I who had to watch him, and to worry myself imagining that I might be doing something better for him. He was my patient, he suffered under me, *passus et sepultus est:* and I heard afterwards that old A said, *The doctor saved me: I wish to God he had saved my boy instead of me.*

I have put these two cases as in my own practice; but I am thinking of another man, who carried about with him, always, the sense that his unsuccessful cases were nearer to him than his successes. It did him no good, nor his patients either; the last thing that he wanted was a poor opinion of himself, and he was only tempting people to take him at his own valuation: but he could not break himself of this habit of mind. There is no name for it, and it neither deserves praise nor helps practice: still, as a part of the discipline, as a purge for pride, I commend it to students. Gentlemen, you attend a patient, who recovers; and you know that he would have recovered under any doctor as good as you are. You attend a patient, who dies; and you know that he would have died under any doctor: but he died under you. The two events do not balance: the recovery of the one does not sweeten the death of the other. A successful case is like sunshine, or music, or food, which a man enjoys as they come,

but they come to everybody: an unsuccessful case is a more intimate experience.

These methods of discipline are of our own invention, and we chastise ourselves. But we also suffer chastisement at the hands of our patients, and at the hands of the brethren. Consider, first, in what measure we are subject to public opinion, and for what good purposes.

We have to bear, now and again, gossip, ill-will, distrust, the proud man's contumely, the insolence of office. There really are people, happily they are rare, who dislike all doctors, and are full of stories against us, and sure that the chemist is not only cheaper, but safer, and quite as gentlemanly, and much nearer. In the silly season, but they never seem to go out of season, they write in this or that paper, under the head-line, *Are Doctors Avaricious?* or, it may be, *Ought we to pay for Health?* To them, we are Shylock; they even go back to the old idea, which to my thinking was the true idea, of a comic Shylock. And, in every place, there is gossip, and one or more idiots who wound characters to kill time.

As for gossip, we are none of us perfect, and some of it is true; and the rest we can alleviate. Like the pilgrim, condemned to walk to Rome with peas in his shoes, who accepted the penance, but boiled the peas, so is the solvent action on gossip of a good temper and a clear conscience.

But the young doctor, the new doctor, in a gossipy house, must never be off his guard. He has seen and prescribed for his patient, and has said all that need be said to the friends; and there is tea, and what seems a favourable opportunity for extending the practice. Trust them not, young man: put your fingers in your ears, and flee from the City of Destruction of Reputations. If you must stay, do not stay long, and keep the door of your lips. Talk of the patient, of the weather, or of the proposition, which will as surely as the bread-and-butter be handed to you, that *There is a good deal of illness about.* Avoid all topics of Church and State, quote neither poetry nor prose, give neither censure nor approval to music and the drama, hide your liking for any art but your own. Leave behind you, for gossip to lap, a saucerful of the milk of human kindness. Never mind about producing a favourable impression; produce this one impression, that you know your work, and that it will not be your fault if the mixture fails to relieve the patient upstairs: and then flee.

Beside gossip, which is the discipline of our tempers, we have to bear opposition, which is the discipline of our convictions. The anti-vaccinationist, the anti-vivisectionist, and the Christian Scientist, are against us. So much the better for our faith in our calling. And, of course, we have

no quarrel with anybody who honestly wants to know why we believe in the protective efficacy of vaccination, the necessity for experiments on animals, and the reality of disease. Our quarrel is, and should be fiercely maintained, against the chief offenders, the Societies, the paid officials, the itinerant lecturers with their platform facts. Yet I advise the young doctor not to rush unarmed, not even to the defence of science and ethics. Our opponents fight us with platform facts; we must beat them with true facts. I advise all students, when they have time, to get a fair knowledge of these three subjects; which cannot be done without steady reading. Not only their duty to their profession, but their own interests, urge them to be thus definite: neither the profession, nor the public, admires Mr. Facing-both-ways. And it is well, also, to keep close at hand, for reference, a store of instances and figures; for we ought to be as firm on the right side as our opponents are fluent on the wrong side.

But, if we are to fight Christian Science, we must make haste: for it will not long survive its founder. It will die before it gets to the poor. Not that it shows any great anxiety to get to the poor, so long as it can get at the rich. It will go downhill quick, for it is not strong: how could it be, with such a family history, with Fear for its father, and with such a Mother? See how

delicate it is. It says nothing, or next to nothing, about our sins; does just mention them, but tends to explain them away as illusions. It appeals to our belief in our own cleverness; hints at a philosophical superiority, a purer vision, a rarer atmosphere; suggests to me, that Plato and I would find a lot to talk about, and that most people are in darkness but I am in light. Its one vital doctrine is this, that God is real. What then is the God of Christian Science? He is, if you unwrap him, the Infinite, the One, the All, *merum Ens*, pure Being: above superstition, above anthropomorphism, above the comprehension of bishops, priests, and deacons, especially deacons. This comfortless word Being, whether in Greek, Latin, or English, always leaves me where it finds me. Still, in this high creed, we must recognize an air of Aristotle, a sense of freedom, and an exercise of the reason, which must all of them, especially the last, be very refreshing to fashionable society. Here, in this cult of Being, we have, if the phrase may be forgiven, a very large order. For you cannot worship *merum Ens* without paying for that intellectual treat. If nothing is real but pure Being, and we must lift up our thoughts all that tremendous way, or nowhere, then it is plain that health, comfort, and life are no more real than sickness, pain, and death. If the black squares on the chess-board are not real, neither

are the white: and a strong spine is just as illusory as a weak one. Christian Science, on its own showing, has only substituted one set of illusions for another. *Look at this advertisement*, say the proprietors of a soap or a pill, *and you see green on a red ground. Shut your eyes, and you see red on a green ground.* That is how the proprietors of Christian Science capture men. There must be much virtue in a soap, if you can see its name with your eyes shut: and red on green must, of course, be more real than green on red, because green on red is what you see with your eyes open, just like ordinary people. It comes to this, that the Christian Scientist, though she sounds very subtle, is not; for she has two Gods, one to explain her pleasures, and the other to explain away her pains; one popular and in touch with the world, the other metaphysical and not in touch with the world.

The testimonials, at the end of the official book, are sad reading. Here are the obsessed, they who cannot help thinking of their insides, and watch for symptoms, and talk of diseases, and read medical books, and are very sensitive, and never know what it is to feel well. The neurotic man who lost all liking for tobacco, thanks to Christian Science; and the diphtheritic child who coughed up some membrane, thanks to Christian Science, and sang a hymn; and the lady who had such a bad time with her

first baby, and such an easy time, thanks to Christian Science, with her second — they all are witnesses. You note, especially, that if a man is in such pain that he cannot fix his mind on Mrs. Eddy's methods, he may have morphia till he can; and that surgical cases, for the present, had better be left to the surgeon, till the world has more faith: but you are not told which cases are surgical and which are medical. I should like to collect and publish what our chief physicians and surgeons know of the works of Christian Science. But apart from its works, and the ill-gotten gains of its proprietors, I hate its faith; and, if it were going to stay in this world, I should thank my God that I am not.

Beside that discipline of practice which we impose on ourselves, and that which our patients and the public impose on us, there is the inner discipline of the brotherhood, the scourge of competition. Always, year in year out, we work under the crack of that whip. It is no wonder, that some students dread starting in practice, and cling too long to resident or travelling appointments. For, say what we will of the excellence of competition, the fact remains, that practice is the breaking of dreams. Inside the precincts of the Hospital, we were safe and at home; she mothered us, sheltered us, made room for us all, and there was no fighting, more than a friendly contest for a prize or a House

appointment. Nowhere, in the imagery of Heaven, is it presented as a competitive system: and the *candidati* are not *candidates*. It is true, that practice has its golden times, when the discipline is remitted. But the gold is rare: and is mixed, in life's till, not only with silver but with coppers, and here and there a bad coin.

THE SPIRIT OF PRACTICE

Our admission to practice might be made a more imposing ceremony: but we have no spare imagination, in our profession, for any such uses. We keep it all for scientific purposes; or we should see, in that row of examiners right and left of the President, the curve of a presbytery: and there would be appropriate rites, and then a little procession of happy young men, from the Examination Hall on the Embankment to the Royal College of Physicians, which would be indeed a procession of the unemployed. Or the authorities might prefer to revive the method of Greece, and to administer to us the Oath of Hippocrates:

I swear by Apollo the Healer, and Aesculapius, and Hygieia, and Panacea.

And I call all Gods and Goddesses to witness, that I will, according to my power and judgment, make good this oath, and this covenant which here I sign.

To think of him who taught me this art as I think of my parents. To hold my life as his life, and to give him, in the time of his need, a share of my belongings. To consider his sons as my brothers, and to teach this art, to such of them as wish to learn it, without payment or agreement.

To impart the doctrine, and the interpretation, and the whole learning, to my sons, and to my master's sons, and to students enrolled and sworn under medical law, and to nobody else.

And I will use all ways of medical treatment that shall be for the advantage of the sufferers, according to my power and judgment, and will protect them from injury and injustice. Nor will I give to any man, though I be asked to give it, any deadly drug, nor will I consent that it should be given. Likewise, I will not procure abortion. But purely and holily I will keep guard over my life and my art.

Nor will I cut them that have the stone, but will send them to men whose work it is to perform that operation.

And, into whatever houses I enter, I will enter into them for the benefit of the sufferers, departing from all wilful injustice and destructiveness, and all lustful works, on bodies male and female, free and slaves. And whatever, in practice, I see or hear, or even outside practice, which it is not right should be told abroad, I will be silent, counting as unsaid what was said.

Therefore, to me accomplishing this oath and not confounding it, may there be enjoyment of life and of art, being in good repute among all men for ever and ever: but, to me transgressing and perjured, the contrary.

It seems a pity that we should tumble into our profession in a way that would have shocked Hippocrates. Ages hence, it may be, our admission to practice will be solemnized with ceremonial observances proper to each of our orders. But nothing shall be said here about our orders: for, in the advance of the whole profession, the lines between them get crossed and shifted. Besides, I am thinking not of the body but of the spirit of practice.

Paré, looking over my shoulder as I write, says that in his time there were three chief orders: the barber-surgeons, the surgeons of the Confraternity of Saint Cosmo, and the physicians. "But as for me," says he, "I protest that I did the offices of all three of them, and was moreover nurse, apothecary, and cook to my patients: neither was there anything in all medicine and surgery left without my hand put to the work. Now I will tell you, for the better instruction of the young surgeon, how I learned my business, by the grace of God. My father was a carpenter, which is a good trade: he used to make the big linen-chests, such as they give to the bride when she leaves her home. I had but little schooling, no more than what Monsieur le Curé taught me. Then, one day, when I was but a boy, Laurence Colot came to Laval, to cut a man for the stone: and when I saw the stone, I said to myself that I would be a surgeon. So my father apprenticed me to a barber-surgeon, I have forgotten his name. I shaved, cut hair, dressed wigs, and sold pomades; I bled and I cupped the customers, and opened many abscesses, and minded the shop: it was a dog's life. My only chance of a lecture or a book was at daybreak, or after nightfall, and then it was in Latin, and I leave you to judge what fine lectures they were. Truly, I was thankful and glad, when I got work at the great Hospital in Paris. I prepared

the dissections for Sylvius his lectures, and examined the bodies of them who died in the Hospital; and I helped at many operations of surgery, not without much lopping-off of limbs, and saw many cases of the plague; I was never in want of a job. Some recovered, the rest died, according to the nature of their wounds and maladies. In one winter, I had the charge of four frost-bitten noses: and one of the Sisters of the Hospital taught me how to make a very excellent ointment. I must not forget to say that there was a Commission, of eight citizens of Paris, to reform the Hospital. I protest before God that we had no need to be reformed: and that I loved the Hospital, and never refused to help any sick person, no, not even in the middle of the night. Then, though I was not yet admitted to the Company of the Barber-surgeons, I took service under Monsieur de Montejan, and went off to the wars. But I kept a foothold in Paris, just two little rooms; and my wife and I were very happy there, when I could be at home. And, by my faith, people came to me, not because I had a degree in Surgery, but because they knew that I could set them on their legs again, if anybody could. Which I did, by the grace of God: and they were well pleased, and gave me many honourable presents, of great value."

He seems to have forgotten the feuds of his time, between the barber-surgeons, the surgeons,

and the physicians. Nobody would think, hearing him now, that he took a great part in them, and led one order of his profession against another. As, in Florence or Perugia, long ago, feuds tore the city, and departed, leaving it half dead, so Medicine was torn by the spirits of Aristotle, Galen, and Saint Thomas Aquinas, possessing and tormenting its members, till Science, at last, cast out of Medicine all authority but her own. Paré has forgotten the grievances and the medical politics which were so exciting then, and sound so strange now. We still have, order against order, one or two grievances, but none serious; we are come as near as any profession to Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity: or, it may be, they have come across the Channel, exiles from Paré's country, to us.

Of the spirit of practice, this much may safely be said, that it does not readily enter into a life which is full of furniture. It must have opportunity for its influences; it cannot write on walls which are covered with pictures, or make its voice heard above music and much talking: the life must be clear, affording space, and observing silence. I have had the honour of knowing many great physicians and surgeons; and I see this in all, or nearly all, of them, that, when they were young, they made ready, for the coming of the spirit of practice, apartments of the utmost simplicity: quiet, bare, whitewashed, empty little rooms. Some of us block the room

with all that we put in it. I know a man who did that. He crammed his brains with books, and learned whole sciences by heart, and read till he could read no more: that was how he furnished the room, and it looked like the inside of a second-hand furniture shop, and he could hardly move without knocking down something, or hurting himself. He was a young man with a great deal of taste; so he decorated the room, very prettily, with soft-coloured upholstery, and old engravings, and casts of the Parthenon frieze, and a piano, and complete editions of the poets. *Now*, said he, *the place is ready, at last, for the spirit of practice.* But it went elsewhere. The use of culture is not to help us in practice, but to console us for want of practice, and then it is above rubies. We serve three masters, our profession, our patients, and our own people: where, in this threefold service, is culture required of us?

Our profession would have us obedient to its rules and loyal to the members of its body, contributing according to our means to the common store of knowledge, and working well: and it no more cares for culture than if we were so many District Nurses, and one could hardly be anything better than that. But our patients, what do they demand? Set aside those demands which may fairly be called not reasonable, for infallibility, for extravagant sympathy, for perfect alacrity to be out all

night for nothing; what, in reason, do they demand? Health, recovery, relief, or at the worst some prolongation of life. What else? When people are very ill, their demands are not many. They send for the doctor to make them well, not for the pleasure of seeing him. There are times when his patients are interested, more or less, in his private affairs, likes and dislikes, tastes, politics, family, previous education, and personal appearance: it is when they are not very ill, or nearly well. The worse they are, the less they note these aspects of him: and, when they are very ill indeed, he might stand on his head, and they would hardly notice it, but would ascribe his strange demeanour to the distempered condition of their senses.

The patient, in his time of peril, wants not us but himself; he wants to be himself again. So far as he wants us, he wants not what we call us, but what we have with us. That is what he means by us. At the last, we are of no use at all, neither we nor what we have with us:

> Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
> Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
> To shake his sapient head, and give
> The ill he cannot cure a name.

So sings Matthew Arnold, if you can call it singing. That, now and again, is our hard lot, to be told, *We sent for you, because we thought we ought, but of course we know that you can't do anything.*

Here, at the start of the downward grade from health to death, is a patient with very little the matter with him or her, well enough to enjoy a talk with the doctor, and hardly needing what he has with him. Here, halfway down the grade, is a patient far too ill to take much interest in the doctor, and caring only for what he has with him. Here, at the last step of the grade, is a patient dying, who wants neither him nor anything. The doctor, as he descends this dolorous way, sheds, bit by bit, his non-medical self, takes it off, as a man in for a fight takes off his coat. Over a very urgent case, he may even divest himself of his manners, and nobody will notice whether he has them on or not: only, he must have with him what is necessary. Last, he comes where he might as well not be there, for all the use that he can be.

Thus, the proper field for culture seems to be among them who, not having much the matter with them, enjoy talking. But not all, even of them, enjoy listening. I know of one, who said to a friend, *I don't want my doctor to talk to me about the National Gallery;* which is a shrewd saying, and has taught me to avoid all such dangerous topics. Anyhow, people who are seriously ill care no more for preciosity in us than for gold-dust in beef-tea. What they want is a man who has just had and cured a case exactly like theirs; and he need not

be a judge of anything outside their insides. It is poor comfort to them, to know that he is very fond of really good poetry.

Young men, whose pride bruises at a touch, are apt to be offended, when they are thus classed as plumbers and glaziers of the body. Perhaps they have never been seriously ill, never come to that point of sharp thought where the physician, the surgeon, the anaesthetist, are your best friends, your Godsends, not because they talk to you about the National Gallery, but just because they do not talk, but dose, anaesthetize, and incise you. Every doctor, early in his course, ought to stand at that point. You cannot be a perfect doctor, till you have been a patient: you cannot be a perfect surgeon, till you have enjoyed in your own person some surgical experience. Enjoyed, I say, and stick to the word. Count the ways of enjoyment. To be the dear object of so much care and friendship, to be compassed about with hopes and prayers, is there no pleasure in that? To behave nicely, and nothing common do or mean, upon that memorable scene, but lie on the operating-table like Patience on a monument, is there no pleasure in that act of self-control? On you, on you, rests the love of many hearts, and every pulse in the house is quick with thinking of you. Somebody, these last few days, for I take it that you are married, or at the least engaged, has been at her wits' end of

miserable anxiety for your sake: and behold, this morning early, she brings you roses and lilies, and wears a wonderful mechanical smile, a most curious grimace, which makes her more beautiful than ever. It is time for the operation. You are, what is so rare in this world, at rest. The very elements of thought and of will, the disposition of the least bodily act, are now to be taken out of your hands. Put them by your side, and shut your eyes. Go to sleep: do nothing, think of nothing, be nothing. Shut your eyes; go to sleep. Before you wake, back in bed, the good news of your safety will be rapped out, like a spiritualist message, at remote post-offices; and kind people, ever so far off, will be saying, all in a breath, *Oh my dear it says doing favourably operation perfectly successful no immediate anxiety thank God best love Tomkins;* and your lady of the roses and lilies, with her pretty face all smudged with crying, and one ear red with listening at the key-hole, will give you such a kiss as no man deserves to have twice. And you, though you feel horribly sick, being so full of ether that you reek like a peppermint-drop, are proud, yes, and happy, and through the fumes of the clinging anaesthetic are the captain of your soul.

Besides, see what you have gained in practice. To be ill, or to undergo an operation, is to be initiated into the mystery of nursing, and to learn the comforts and discomforts of an invalid's life;

the unearthly fragrance of tea at daybreak, the disappointment of rice-pudding when you thought it was going to be orange-jelly, and the behaviour of each constituent part of the bedclothes. You know, henceforth, how many hours are in a sleepless night; and what unclean fancies will not let us alone when we are ill; and how illness may blunt anxiety and fear, so that the patient is dull, but not unhappy or worried; and how we cling to life, not from terror of death, nor with any clear desire for the remainder of life, but by nature, not by logic. In brief, you learn from your own case many facts which are not in text-books and lectures: and your patients, in the years to come, will say that they prefer you to the other doctor, because you seem to understand exactly how they feel. I wish you therefore, young man, early in your career, a serious illness, or an operation, or both. For thus, and thus alone, may you complete your medical education, and crown your learning with the pure gold of experience. The crown of experience is like the crown of Lombardy, a band of iron set in a band of gold: and it is believed, even now, by some people, that the iron of that crown is more valuable than the gold.

Besides, see what you have gained in thought. I hesitate here, for I am on disputed territory. Of course, no problem is solved, no doctrines are shifted, by illness. Only, as you lie a-thinking,

this cleared space of a few weeks does present to you an aspect of life which your work hides from you. If the mind be clouded or swamped, all aspects of life are blurred or lost: but, in most illnesses, there are fine days, when thought can go out and get a good view. The feel of life, at such a time, may be compared to the feel of London, at four o'clock in the morning, to a man walking home after a ball. The streets and squares and houses are the same as ever; and so is he. The taste of his pipe in his mouth, the echo of the music in his head, the chill of the pavement under his feet, are familiar to him; everything is what it always was and will be, nothing is happening; and he makes his way past the shouting linkmen and the line of cabs and carriages, glad to be out in the open air, and as sure as Cleopatra that there is nothing remarkable beneath the visiting moon. Only, as he goes, the silence, the closed shops, the odd sense of solitary wakeful self, the brooding sky, the empty roads, begin to talk to him, asking him to see for himself how, even in London, Nature is omnipresent, and, *in the act of labouring like a machine, sleeps as a picture.* Then they remind him that all London is but a point in the world's purpose; yes, and all the world but a point in the universal purpose, or what is the good of the stars? He begins to feel small; and is surprised that he was proud, half-an-hour ago, of his excellent dancing.

A breeze of dawn comes, and raises a little whirl of dust: and he says to himself, being a thoughtful young man for his age, that the Anima Mundi is just like that, and every speck of dust is a planet. If planets are specks of dust, Lord, what is man? There is a touch of light in the East: and it sets him wondering at his own existence, continuous from day to day. He never thought of that in the ball-room. There, he had thought it romantic to dance five times with one partner: here, under the stars, he finds more romance than he had expected. Nothing has happened, he is what he was, he has not changed a hair's-breadth, nor has London: bricks and mortar, trees and sparrows, have no arguments in them, no logical force. All the same, the vision did come to him.

So it may be with a man when he is ill. The silent, empty hours, the lull in the traffic of his life, the shutters up in the shop-front of his work, have something to say to him: they explain nothing, but they give him a point of view. They emphasize his individuality. It is all very well, in the vanity of health, to call ourselves a succession of states of consciousness: that nonsense is knocked out of us by a month in bed, where we have time and opportunity to feel sure that we are not. An illness, I hardly know how, does tend to make us understand that matter and reality are not interchangeable terms. Here, in this sense of the

non-material reality of self, is a thread worth holding. Especially, it is to be found, and held, in the very act of surrender to an anaesthetic. For he, who offers himself to be reduced to unconsciousness, is most conscious; and the freedom of his will was never more plain to him than now, when he lays it down. With the first breath of ether, he flings a last defiance to all that we call Haeckel, and swears that it is false. Which is a fine experience, and cheap at the price.

Therefore, since happiness, and insight into other people's feelings, and even a thread of philosophy, may be got out of illness, I advise every young doctor to take his chance of being a patient. But, when he is well again, and back at work, he must keep his philosophy to himself, not let it come near his cases. I do not mean that he will infect them, but that he may be tempted to philosophize over them. The spirit of practice refuses point-blank to have anything to do with philosophy: and quite right too. All practice, to the great advantage of our patients, is founded and built on materialism. No other foundation could bear for a moment the weight of the present building. In practice, we take it for granted, that our fellow-creatures are what Haeckel says that they are. That is the law of our work, and we are under it from the beginning of our preliminary studies to the end of our working lives.

So long as we are in the dissecting-rooms and the

physiological laboratory, materialism is content to enslave us, and scarcely troubles to convert us. But, when we advance from anatomy and physiology to medicine and surgery, it assumes a more inquisitorial air, and loves, in the wards, to send us down on our bended knees. *Look here*, it says, *and here, and here: and don't you dare to bandy words with Me.* That is Haeckel's clinical teaching, his way of demonstrating the facts of pathology. These cases of injury or disease of the brain, what are they, but brains injured or diseased? If you believe that they are more than that, put your belief to the test. Here is a case of cerebral haemorrhage: *Cry aloud, for he is a god, peradventure he sleepeth, and must be waked.* And there is no voice, nor any to answer. From ward to ward, forcing on us the one simple explanation of everything, dominating the whole Hospital, bullying everybody, absolutely self-satisfied, rages Haeckel, never in doubt, never at a loss: and carries us along at his heels. This is the way we go to school, we go to school, we go to school; the only way for us to learn our art. A patient is a case, Latin *casus*, an occurrence; that is Haeckel's rule: and we must practise what he preaches, and take hold of his hand tight, and not let go, or we shall get lost, or run over at the next crossing.

We cannot do better than obey him. Foolish people talk as if it were somehow the doctor's

fault, and a rebuke against him, that every scrap of his work is saturated with materialism. Why, that is just how he makes it tell. There is no place, in practice, for any other form of thought. Here, for instance, is a patient in immediate danger of death, but not quite past all hope of recovery. To the philosopher, the poet, he is *animula, hospes comesque corporis*. To the doctor, who must deal with him at once, and that by methods most unpoetical, he is neither *hospes* nor *comes corporis*, but just *corpus*. We learned him as *corpus*, and it took us five years, and some of us more, to learn him that way: and we treat him as *corpus*, because it takes us all our learning to treat him that way. For the sake of our patients, the spirit of practice compels us to work always within the ring-fence of materialism.

But this wise compulsion, this honourable law of our work, is a purely business arrangement between the spirit of practice, on the one hand, and the practitioner, on the other hand. It is a convention, a serviceable fiction, a good understanding between them. In every art, there is convention. Observe this admirable subscription-portrait of His Worship the Mayor, in his robes of office. It is dumb, though he is voluble; it is flat, though he is not; it cannot stir, though he is a very active man. This painted cloth, this idol, which everybody admires as a work of art, is the only way in

which the artist could treat the Mayor. So we, when we treat our patients, obey the conventions of our art. Like the postulates of Euclid, which enable him to solve his problems and construct his figures, they enable us to solve our problems and employ our methods. Euclid takes it for granted, that he is dealing with lines perfectly straight; we take it for granted, that we are dealing with automatic machines out of order. Both assumptions, alike, are but the forgeries of science.

Look back to the time when you were not the doctor but the patient, lying there and wondering at the mystery of yourself; or to the day of your operation, when that mystery accompanied you as you went under the anaesthetic, and met you as you came out of it. You were you, that day, and your brain was yours, not you. Pick up this thread, and follow its guidance. How far does it go? Never mind; follow it, and see. It has nothing to do with practice? But practice, by and by, will have nothing to do with you. In that day, you may be glad of a thread of philosophy. For the present, submit yourself, in all your work, to the spirit of practice; accept the current jargon about thought-cells and successions of states of consciousness: and hide your thread of philosophy from the derision of Haeckel.

Here are many pages, all to say that the spirit of practice regards neither culture nor philosophy.

This negative conclusion is but a poor result, in comparison with the kind things said of us in books about good doctors, and in Hospital-Sunday sermons. But is it not true, and positive, that the spirit of practice loves to enter such lives as offer to it neither adornments, nor a view out of the windows, but a bare room, and expectant silence, and passionate longing for it, and for it alone?

Nil ergo optabunt homines? Have we, then, nothing to pray for? Indeed, Juvenal's prayer, being one of the world's masterpieces, will bear translation here. (*We know not*, he says, *how to pray. We pray for wealth, glory, eloquence, beauty, strength, long life: and the easy-going Gods grant our prayers, and thereby we bring on ourselves misery and ruin.*) "Well, then, shall men stop praying? If you want my advice, you will let the Gods themselves decide what is good for us and useful for our stations in life. For they will give us, not the pleasures of the moment, but all that is most fit for us. Man is dearer to them than to himself. Still, that you may have something to say, some prayer to go with your foolish sacrifices, pray for a sound mind in a sound body. Ask for a brave heart, wholly free from the fear of death; a heart which reckons mere length of days among the least of Nature's kindnesses, and can bear all hardship, and cannot lose its temper over trifles, and covets nothing, and is persuaded that the bitter labours

of Hercules have more salvation in them than the lust and luxury of Sardanapalus. Behold, I am telling you of those gifts which you can give to yourself, Gods or no Gods."

But these gifts will not suffice. Pray to the Gods, also, for a fair measure of the love of science, a good memory, a quiet manner, the accurate use of your hands and your senses, and the necessity of making money. Pray even for opposites; for humility and pride, for plodding business-ways and for the wings of ambition, for a will both stubborn and flexible: and, above all, for that one gift which has been the making of the best men in our profession, the grace of simplicity of purpose.

WREATHS AND CROSSES OF PRACTICE

A FLORIST'S shop, at the height of the fashion, is a strange sight. Roses out of season, and carnations grown so large that they wear paper stays to preserve their figures; other less fortunate flowers dyed, wired, or twisted in devices, or imprisoned in wooden shoes and china wheelbarrows; violets without earth, forget-me-nots without water, crocuses growing out of terracotta pigs, and green grass sprouting over comic little bald heads. Across the fragrance of the flowers, you seem to catch the smell of a restaurant: and the messenger-boy, going off with an elaborate centre-piece of poppies, is the counterpart of the confectioner's boy coming round with the ices. Fashion, you would say, has ousted Nature. Yet, as you stand there, you become aware that Nature, lurking about the shop, is watching you with a spiteful smile, and will still have the last word: and she has it, on a label, slung in the window, *Wreaths and Crosses*. That is Nature's way. She is not in any hurry, *nihil per saltum facit;* everything comes to her who waits. We, who

now order table-decorations, and bouquets to match frocks, shall one day have wreaths and crosses ordered to match us. You catch your breath, for a moment, at that; and the shop seems haunted. The white flowers are whispering one to another: *Are you engaged to-morrow afternoon? Yes, Kensal Green, worse luck.* They nod their wicked heads at you. The big white lilies, especially, have seen you looking at the label, and guess your thoughts, and share your misgivings, and are going your way: *Ave Caesar*, they say with a little laugh, *morituri te salutant.* None of them, for my money, this Saturday evening: give me unconcerned, unfashionable, jolly flowers, that are never in mourning, and such as go neither to funerals, no, nor to dinner-parties: homely flowers, of all the colours of the rainbow, and with none of the associations of the cemetery.

A wreath does not commit the kind donor to any expression of opinion; a cross might seem to commit him. Perhaps, therefore, a wreath is safer: one does not want to appear to be putting oneself forward, or pretending more than one really feels. Yes, a wreath, please, a nice wreath. Tie your card to it: you have paid your last call on your friend, and he was out. Or shall it be a cross? For he was ill such a long time, and did so want to get well. Shall we drive back to the shop, and tell them to make it a cross, not a

wreath? Perhaps, after all, we had better not. People are so silly, they do notice such little things, and they always read the cards. Besides, there are sure to be lots of crosses; there always are. And somehow a wreath seems more appropriate. Perhaps he wouldn't quite have liked a cross, himself. Indeed, now you come to think of it, they were married at a registry-office: of course, that was a long time ago, still, they were. So you send your wreath; and somebody else, because your friend, whether he liked crosses or not, certainly bore one, sends a cross; and then somebody, as scrupulous as you, sends a wreath; and then somebody sends a cross for this reason, that if people do not like them, they ought. Thus, at the last, the whole house is fragrant with these opposed emblems.

Practice, also, has her wreaths and crosses: but she is never in doubt which to send, for she does not wait till we are dead. Nor does she play fast and loose with the difference between them. To her mind, a wreath is a wreath, and a cross is a cross, *patibulum*, as it was in the days of Tiberius. A wreath for the victor, and a triumph, along the Sacred Way, up to the Capitol: a cross for the unsatisfactory slave, and off with him to the Esquiline.

The wreaths of Practice are those highest rewards which she gives to our leaders, our victorious generals, and to them alone. The cross of Practice

is failure in practice. Its weight, in each case, is determined by the rights and the wrongs of that particular case.

Over failure, a man may laugh, or preserve a dignified silence, or worry himself to bits: do what he will, he cannot get clear away from the idea that he has himself, in some measure, to blame. Practice does not desire that he should thus get clear away. What he was, she says, is where he is: and where he is, she says, is just about where he ought to be.

But why should a man be surprised at some admixture, in his life, of failure? Is it to be wondered at, that now and again we take the wrong turning in the maze, play the wrong move in the game? It would be a miracle, if we did not. Why then should we be tragic over the sense of failure, or, what is worse than tragic, theatrical? To be sorry for our faults is trouble enough, without making a scene over them, and them so common. Let us avoid the antick disposition of the penitent hero on the stage. Behind him prostrate on a wooden rock, a paper moon rides in a muslin sky. In front of him, the footlights, glassed in green, shed a pale gloom, as from the paper moon. Beneath him, in the bowels of the stage, the fiddles wail, the double-basses grunt, in sympathy with such a weight of woe. He stirs, he speaks; and lo, from highest Heaven, a ray of limelight falls on his sad

face. He is in real distress, his plans have failed, and he tells us that it was his fault. He put the will, in a moment of light-hearted carelessness, where the villain found it. He forgot to tell the heroine that the wine was drugged, the plank sawn half-through, the letters forged. No wonder that the fiddles are crying and shivering, and the larger instruments are breathing heavily: for here is genuine tragedy, which is a series of unavoidable disasters, arising directly out of human character, and happening to somebody very important.

We are all of us that; and all of us, in point of character, are more or less at fault: and then, direct from our fault, comes failure. We were ardently in love with Success; we were going to marry her, and live happy ever after. The very day was fixed for the wedding: indeed, we were on our way to the church, when we remembered that we had forgotten to tell her about the villain. Even as we came up the lane, in our best clothes, she, poor dear, all smiles and song, and thinking only of us, was walking that plank, and went splash into the deserted lock. Oh, it is too dreadful. Tragedy, tragedy, let us play up to you, and *fall upon the ground, Taking the measure of an unmade grave.*

Yet, if a man, disappointed of the fullness of his hopes, is hard hit by that loss, it is no laughing matter; and, as we admire him who hides a hurt,

so we distrust him who does not feel one. When we ask a man, *Does it hurt?* and it does, we like him to say *Yes*. If he says, *No, I feel nothing*, either he is not speaking the truth, or there is something wrong with his nervous system.

Consider, what is the hurt of failure in practice. I do not mean complete failure, the point at which a man must either do nothing, or take some new occupation: I mean partial failure, some disappointment, that line along which a man must continue at his work, the same as before, what there is of it.

He casts about in his mind, to find what has happened. Was it self, or chance, or Providence, or circumstances, or an enemy, or what was it, that was against him? First, he takes himself, holds his own character to the light, as you may see a housewife, in autumn, examining a blanket. He finds, of course, one or two moth-holes. Perhaps he was not really practical in practice, but had bookish views as to the proper behaviour of diseases; or he was a bit slow, unbusiness-like, a lover of leisure, a bad hand at making work; or he was a bit quarrelsome, or hard, or difficult, or fantastical; or he was of the number of those who are proud of being humble, who assert their freedom from self-assertion, and advertise their dislike of advertisement; or he was fond of talking about himself to people who were aching to talk about themselves. One or more of these faults he finds in himself:

yet, honestly, he cannot see that they explain his disappointment. They had, he says, something to do with it. But the fault and the failure do not balance, are not proportionate. Over the doors of old cathedrals, amid a labyrinth of sculpture, angels weigh in balances the souls of men; over the doors of law-courts, Justices hold empty balances, waiting blindfold for a job. All the same, fault and failure are not commensurate. Fault is dynamic: a few grains of fault can blow up a whole edifice of ambition, and spoil the finest castle that ever was built in the air. Our imaginary man has suffered that reverse. His castle still stands, but with sad cracks in its walls, and broken windows, and a leaking roof. The dynamite went off: and we need not trouble to ask what made it go off. Perhaps it went off by chance. Anyhow, he had it there: he is himself, in a measure, the cause of his disappointment.

Then comes the thought, how many lives are affected. Here, just here, is the hurt of his disappointment, in its centrifugal results on circles beyond circles of other people. The shaking of his castle is like the seismic waves of Mont Pêlée, which were felt, again and again, by every observatory in the world, and are still embodied, somehow, in the universe. First, his home-circle. I assume, of course, that he is middle-aged, and has given hostages to fortune. Solitary men, as they miss

the sweetness of making money, so they avoid the bitterness of wanting it: young men, likewise, avoid that bitterness, for they are sure that the sweets are to come. Therefore, our imaginary man is middle-aged, and has a wife and family: and, as his life tastes now, so it will taste henceforth.

Husband and wife, while they are young, and the baby is still the baby, play at economy as at a game. They remind me of that pleasant minstrel, at the swing-doors of the public-house, who gets melody out of a coffee-pot with holes cut in the spout, or from hard little strips of glass or metal. They shall have music wherever they go. To him and her, who can find pleasure in saving a cab-fare, and spend that shilling, arm in arm, quite seriously, on something else, that she really did want, this discourse is not addressed. I envy and honour them. Out of books, out of good examples, out of their own hearts, they encourage one another, and quote the whole anthology of the praise of thrift: *My father was just as poor, at my age, as I am. My mother had to do without lots of things: besides, she had such bad health.* They invent challenges and pass-words of love: *Why didn't you marry somebody with money?* That is the challenge; and the pass-word takes all four lips. They surprise each other with sixpennorths of luxury, and have a thousand plans for the immediate future, and Aunt Maria's fifty pounds is spent in fancy many

times before it comes to them. In the profound Greek sense of the word, they have enthusiasm. Look which way they will, back or here or ahead, they see sunshine: and people ask them to evening-parties because their happiness lights up that dim pleasure. They find a sacrament in their daily bread, and a miracle in the coming of the baby. To save, to wait, to scrape along, — why, that is what they enjoy; that is the way to begin, the classic, heroic, historic, romantic, practical way: besides, how stupid it would be to be rich now, how vulgar. See them, this man and this woman, setting-out, hand in hand, heart in heart, into an expectant world. I could rhapsodize for pages over them: indeed, if it comes to that, they can do it for themselves. In all life, there is nothing more delightful, more inspiriting, than the sight of their bow in the clouds; and I hope that it will be lost not in a sky of grey, but in a sky all sapphire.

But suppose the sky keeps grey. Not black, but grey; no storm clears the dull air and washes the streets of life: only, the sky is grey, and the bow gone. Oh, not a regular wet day, no excuse for stopping indoors, or giving up any engagement: still, a dull heavy sort of day, and rather cold, considering that it ought to be summer. Slowly, the sense of effort and of make-believe comes into their game of economy. They begin to long to play at something else. Once, they were proud

of not being rich: now, the most that they can compass is to be proud of not being ashamed of being poor; and sometimes even that humble pride breaks, and lies in the dust. Once, they could chaff one another over his earnings, and had a sort of slang, for home-use, a love's lingo, weird names for the tradesmen's bills, and for his pocket-money, and her sewing-machine: but that is all left off now, because it hurts them both; and he gives her with a sigh the week's takings, which he used to give with a laugh; and each of them is longing to see the other looking happy. Hospitality, so far as they still exercise that grace, begins to lose touch with the rest of home-life. Into their rare festivities, there enters a hint of Macbeth's feast; no actual ghost, nothing so gross as that: only, on your way back, you cannot help doubting whether he and she, left alone, are very cheerful. That is the most dreadful passage in all Shakspeare, when everybody has gone, the ghost and all of them, and Macbeth is talking to himself, and his wife is looking at him.

Circle beyond circle, the wave of their disappointment spreads. They cannot afford to be generous, they cannot afford to be charitable. This embarrassment might be called a negative trouble: but I always have a difficulty in seeing any difference between negative and positive. Not to give, is to withhold. Say that a well-timed gift would save

a man or a woman from going to the bad. Is it not to say that he, who withholds that gift, sends them there?

He and she did so want to be hospitable and charitable: it seems such a reasonable desire. What shall they do? I do not see that they can do anything. He has not altogether failed; he is only a bit disappointed, a bit disillusioned. *Oh, they have much to be thankful for*, says their little world: *they have good health, and I do like her so much.* That is quite true, they have a great deal to be thankful for: but, for all that, he and she, still hand in hand, and heart in heart, are bearing the cross of practice between them.

Practice, thank Heaven, sends also wreaths; olive, laurel, gold, she has them of all sorts, I have seen them: and never, in all the history of Medicine, were they more plentiful and more beautiful than they are now. *Ah, did you once see Shelley plain, And did he stop and speak to you?* Shelley, indeed. Why, I have seen and shaken hands with doctors worth a wilderness of Shelleys. Into their keeping, God entrusted lives precious to the Empire, to be saved. Out of their work, out of their discoveries, came, and come, and will come, health and safety and length of days and delivery from pain.

Yet, if we look close at Medicine, we may doubt whether any wreath, that Practice has to give, is equal in value to the wreaths of Science. The

doctor, more and more, turns, for the advancement of his art, toward the physiologist, the pathologist, and the bacteriologist. From them, who are not in practice, whose work is in the laboratory, whose language is mostly unintelligible to us practitioners, have come new methods, new facts: to them we look, and shall not look in vain, for help and guidance.

RETIREMENT

He who would write a book, but cannot think of a subject, should plan a series of short essays, each on a word. To that end, he should open, at random, a dictionary; and there he will find, always, a word in want of an essay. This method of divination, the *sortes*, was once in frequent use; and may be less foolish than it sounds. You open, at random, a Bible or a Virgil, and take, as advisers, the first words that come. Why should you not? Say that you cannot decide between two courses, cannot look far ahead: shall not one of the Hundred Best Books, at random, be as wise as you at sea? You are ready enough to use a friend that way, opening his heart at random, and letting yourself be guided by what you find there. A friend and a book are not so very different: indeed, the book may be the truer prophet, as with King Charles the First, who opened a Bible, and found, *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow*. None of his friends had warned him of that. And, even on me, the *sortes* have just dis-

played their power. For I had headed this chapter, and begun to write it, and then I fell to playing *sortes* with a volume of Johnson's Dictionary. I opened it, at random, six times: and behold, the third time, this very word Retirement, which I had just written, met my eyes. The other five words were Pardon, Sorrow, Morality, Vitality, and Thief: all thoroughly essayable words, especially Pardon.

Retirement, said the Dictionary, is derived from the French. To understand the meaning of a word, one must observe and consider what pictures it raises in the mind's eye. This Retirement gave me three such pictures. First, I had a vision of French and English thumping each other up and down Southampton Water, or under the walls of Calais, or round and round some old castle in Normandy: and the French were swearing, I could hear them all this way off, and across the centuries, that these devils of English were retiring, *se retiraient*. Then, came a curious vision of an amoeba under the microscope: I could see it contracting, till all its processes were indrawn, and it ceased to move. Then, I saw what I took to be the wilderness, and a man, alone in the wilderness, gone there for that one purpose, to be alone.

Of course, to play this game of word-pictures as it ought to be played, you must have words of the right size. As a rule, the size of a word

is inversely as its length. For example, all such words as heterogenesis, undenominationalism, and diazoamidonaphthalene, though two of them really mean something, and the third is in daily use, yet you cannot play with them, because they are too small: they raise feeble, ridiculous pictures. On the other hand, such words as love and life and death are too large: they raise no pictures, only frames. Your words must be of the right size, and, as it were, of the right shape: then, with a little care, you can obtain a delightful succession of pictures. I only got three out of Retirement: but some words will give you half-a-dozen, or more.

Of my three, the first and the last were commonplace. But the vision of the amoeba was of great value: it more than illustrates, it illuminates, the meaning of the word. To retire, *se retirer*, is to draw back self; the verb is, or was, active, governing self, like conscience, in the accusative: and the dictionary gives an instance of this old use, *He retired himself into the castle.* No wonder I saw soldiers. For a soldier, there is always the castle; for a hermit, there is always the wilderness: but let us, in accordance with the principles of physiology, begin with a very humble organism. The amoeba is its own castle, its own wilderness; it cannot retreat but into itself. When it feels the need of retirement, it merely contracts. Its occupation, so far as we can see, is gone: it neither thrusts-out

adventurous feelers, nor hunts after food, nor adapts itself to its surroundings, nor deludes medical students into talking about voluntary movements, nor takes any interest in its neighbours. It may be digesting, or it may be dead: a dreadful sort of retirement, to be so inert as to leave doubt on that point.

The amoeba is a warning to all of us, against the day when we also shall retire. Having no refuge, it simply leaves off. Its very name signifies change; and now it has ceased to change. We dare not do that; we must have a refuge. Let us prepare for ourselves, now, castles to withstand the siege of Monotony, and let us fit ourselves to find opportunity in the wilderness of Superannuation. If we do not betake ourselves to some resort outside ourselves, we shall not retire; we shall only contract.

But the amoeba, when it is weary of retirement, can start again. We retire once and for all, and cannot a second time come forth, suffer ourselves to be desired, nor blush to be admired. Over the door through which we pass, and shut it behind us, the red lamp is extinguished; we resign our appointments, cut-off our night-bells, and remove our brass-plates: I shall keep mine for the last of my abodes, when I shall retire a few feet deeper from my profession.

It is strange that men should talk so lightly of retirement, seeing that it can no more be undone than the rest of our deeds. The explanation of

this levity may be, that retirement takes time, outstays emotion, and does not lend itself to dramatic treatment, or to the sending of telegrams and flowers. Surely, in these days of pageants, we ought to devise a ceremony of retirement, a service of surrender. The Universities might arrange some cheerful yet sympathetic office, that should gather into one passionate, formal act, the doctor's thoughts, as his work drops from his hands: and I think, also, that the Church might suggest something. And, for those of us to whom University and Church sound excessive, there should be at least a vellum address from the Mayor and Corporation, and a silver inkstand, and a band playing Auld Lang Syne, and tea and coffee downstairs. But the fact is, that retirement is a lengthy and deliberate process, so sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought that it loses the name of action. To be born, or to be married, or to die, is the work of a moment: and the clock records the baby's first cry, the sudden cadence of the knotting-words of the marriage service, and the last sigh of the breath. But we cannot thus time retirement. Kings and Queens and Cabinet Ministers can, but not we:

> Now mark me, how I will undo myself.
> I give this heavy weight from off my head,
> And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand;
> The pride of kingly sway from out my heart:

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous rites.

That is how kings retire, and the whole sky is red with that sunset: but we, less majestical, whose only language is prose, and home our only audience, we go slowly, feeling our way; and so gradual is the action that we hardly note the finality of the act. There have been so many plans and calculations, that the event seems merely the last of many plans, and is no surprise to our friends. *Why*, they say, *he's been retiring for ever so long: he was talking of it last February, after that attack of influenza.* The change from autumn to winter, if you go by the thermometer, does not feel like an event. If you want to make an event of it, you must go by the calendar. So we, changing from the harvest of practice to the frosts of retirement, go by the thermometer of our hopes and fears, which have a wide range, and are slow to settle down. If we want to make an event of it, we must go by the calendar of our fates, in which book our retirements are precisely marked, just like our births, marriages, and deaths, one day for each event.

The act, or event, of retirement is the same for all of us: but the attendant circumstances are particular to each of us. Some men are born to

retirement, some achieve it, and some have it thrust upon them.

He who is born to retirement is of that temperament which is called retiring. Other names for it, in order of merit, are these — unassuming, mild, soft, and feeble. The born retirer does not understand, he never did, he never will, how to fight, force his way, hold his own, and increase his holding, advance, bring up reinforcements, advance again, and beat thundering at the gates of Success: *Open, open to me. Open, I say. It is I.* The passion of his profession flickers in him, just keeps him warm, but will never blaze. He was always like that. In the nursery, he was fond of his toys, but let all the other children play with them; and, in the service of that charity which begins at home, many were broken, and he did not mind. At school, he was a good boy; pleased, out of all proportion, with every gradual inch of advancement, a remove, a word of praise, full marks for a set of verses, bookish little triumphs, all of them: but the point is, that competition made them none the sweeter, and full marks all round would have pleased him just as well, if not better. Compelled to take part in athletic exercises, he behaved, rather than played; and half was vexed at his incapacity, and half was vain of it. Physically, he was inclined toward cowardice, and contrived to go all his time

at school without one thrashing either official or otherwise. Diligent, polite, tidy, punctilious in religion and fastidious over food, and glad to share both his prayers and his hampers with other boys; found on the side of the authorities in times of feud, and bearing his own authority, when it came to him, with provoking meekness; fond of loneliness, yet desirous of popularity: self-observant, elaborate — oh, who can describe a boy's inner world? — but his hold on the real world was all wrong. To fight and sweat and put himself in the way of pain, to stick to his rights with brute force and bad language against attack and strategy, to find fault with heaven and earth, to mock and rage and rebel — these accomplishments were not in his plan, if he had one, of his life. He was content with his conscience, his books, his fair record, his tepid sense that some of us thought well of him. When he left, we were neither sorry nor glad; nor was he. School cut no deep mark on him, nor he on it. He had wanted to be good, had tried to be good, had been good: and we had no objection to that, or next to none. But he had failed to fight, had worked, but had not fought. At the hospital, he was much the same. There, of course, they diagnosed his case; no actual disease, no real degeneration: simple weakness, or deficiency of strength. This brilliant diagnosis had not occurred to the authorities at his

school, because they did not know, there, what he was going to be, and what sort of strength he would want. In practice, he did begin to try to fight, but without much result. Always, he was inclined to take the day's work not as competition but as performance; not as a good-natured scrimmage for a front place in the crowd, but as a walk through interesting streets. Later, he began to persuade himself, or half persuade himself, that a solitary walk is the best form of exercise. Later still, he began to be neglectful of honourable and approved ways of self-advancement, and to feel a bit out of heart, slack, envious. So, at last, the quiet verdict went round, that he might have done better. And some of the jury, for they liked him — Heaven, not thinking it wise to give him much money, had given him many friends — said that it was infernal hard lines on him. But was it?

> For still the Lord is Lord of might:
> In deeds, in deeds, He takes delight.

But we need not waste pity on them who are born to retirement. They find pleasure by the way; it is a kindly nature, a not ignoble birthright: there is much to be said in favour of it, and would be more, if there were no such place as the world. Let us keep our pity for them who have retirement thrust upon them. Ill-health,

disablement, bereavement, misadventure, offence, I dare not write of these ways of grief and tragedy. And I console myself with the thought that a man may have retirement thrust upon him, not by adversity, but by prosperity. A legacy, too big to be hid, from a kind uncle, the sort of legacy that gets into the papers, is apt to make our patients say that we do not want practice, and have raised our fees to a giddy height, and are thinking of buying a palace on the Grand Canal; *and as for his wife, my dear Louisa, why, she won't look at you and me now, I suppose.* In the long run, the uses of such prosperity may be no sweeter than the uses of adversity.

Of them who achieve retirement, it is true that we may all do that, by achieving old age: we have but to stay here till practice retires from us. But I would narrow the phrase and keep it sacred. Achievement is a word for Caesar. He achieves retirement, whose absence is felt far and wide through his profession; whose work stands long after he has gone. He led and taught so many of us: he set so many of us on lines just suited to our abilities, he knew what was in us. To watch him operate, was a pleasure: to meet him in consultation, was an honour. We recall his very words and looks, we tell old stories about him to young men who will never see or hear him.

One way and another, we retire. What next?

Fanciful pictures are common, too common, of Sabine farms, and long walks and long talks, and the beauty of the country. These pictures are not to be trusted. Neither in the country, nor in the town, is it easy for us doctors to be happy in retirement. For consider this, which I reckon among the seeming cruelties of Providence, that he who has done most suffers most from the want of something to do; he who has worked hardest is hardest hit by the sudden silence of the loss of work. He gave up everything for his work, and now he must give up his work. Take the case of Velox, who had, as we all know, a huge practice in the Midlands. By day and night, by road and rail, he drove his influence to every point of the compass, into half-a-dozen towns and fifty villages; a masterful man, dominant and positive, a born fighter, loving to besiege, in all honour and by declared war, the strongholds of other men. For thirty years he did without a holiday, never afraid of the rush of the day's work, the night-calls, the meals got anyhow, the nearness of a breakdown; then, victory, and a stately practice, unassailable, fortified in authority: at last, his name a household word, his face known everywhere, his presence felt, his anger dreaded, his verdict final, and no wonder, for there was no sounder judge of an obscure case, not in all England. For thirty miles round, he was the man to have. In every country-house,

in time of peril, the cry was, *Send for Velox:* and he knew all their secrets, and very unsavoury some of them were. See him, on the go from breakfast to supper, and then, after supper, over his pipe, writing letters and making up his books to any hour. He did the work of two men; and slept, like Napoleon, in his carriage.

Then, at the zenith of his practice, Velox fell ill: and, with a certain fitness, his malady was no less tempestuous than himself. They fought it out between them: Death would not budge an inch for Velox, nor he for Death. Each had a long score against the other, run-up at a thousand bedsides. The struggle was of unprecedented length and severity, till exhausted Nature finally separated them, and declared that honour was satisfied. The matter was compromised. Velox was permitted to survive, to Death's disgust, but was compelled to retire, to Death's relief. They exchanged the usual courtesies, but feebly, for both of them were badly shaken. Death, the brute, went off round the corner, and avenged himself on a small child, one of his adversary's patients. Velox, with that sentence ringing in his ears, stumbled away, somehow or other, out of the crowd, and sat down to think, like Marius among the ruins of Carthage. The bitterness of retirement, the full and sudden bitterness, had come to him, whose life's work had filled with sweetness so many lives. He was not thinking

of the loss of money. At seven shillings a visit, and even at less, if you only save enough lives, you can save plenty to live on. He was thinking of the loss of work: he felt as if he were bound hand and foot, his eyes bandaged, his ears stopped, his mouth gagged. So this was the end of it all, to be idle, idle: to come to a standstill, he, Velox, to be superfluous, to have nothing to do.

We told him that he would enjoy travelling, Italy, Egypt, a voyage round the world: but he did not want to see the world, he wanted to see patients. Somebody suggested golf, somebody bridge; and he turned and rent them, not without bad language. Between a death and a funeral, you do not invite the chief mourner, by way of consolation, to a dinner-party; and Velox had just lost the love of a life-time, and said that it was damned unkind of us to talk rot like that about him and bridge. Books, gardening, politics, were all urged, and all fell flat: or, to speak with exactness, did not fall, having nowhere to fall, but remained in mid-air, mere possibilities, waiting till Velox should be less impossible. Always, he had been proud of having no time for these pursuits, proud of giving to his children the advantages which had not been given to him when he was their age. Two sons at the University, which was hard indeed to manage, and four daughters as well educated as the county families, which was less difficult, he had

spent on them the earnings of his tearing life. *You've got your work cut out for you*, he used to say to them, *and your Mother has got her's, and I've got mine.* Now, it is cut away from him. What shall take its place? Shall he begin, right off, at sixty, to enjoy new pursuits? *Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit?* The year after next, perhaps, he may be elected Mayor: a fine consolation, when a man is feeling like Prometheus bound, that he may live to be a Mayor.

If he could have written a full record of his experiences, a System of General Practice, it would have been a very valuable book. But the greater part of his wisdom was hardly communicable; and he had mere scraps of notes of cases, and not one case in twenty had been noted at sufficient length to be of any use for a book: and, of course, it had not been possible for him to keep up with physiology and bacteriology. Besides, the whole business of writing was unfamiliar to him, and almost ridiculous: and he was appalled at the present flood of medical literature, especially in America and Germany. No, catch him trying to write a book; men must find things out for themselves, by experience, the way he had gone: and, as he said that, it sounded like Paré's voice, *See how I learned to treat gunshot wounds; not out of books.*

Prometheus bound, Samson shorn and blinded, Velox out of work, are tragic figures: but most of

us, at heart, would rather be cast for tragedy than for comedy. It is better to be dull in old age, than to be distracted, in middle age, by outside interests and elaborate devices against dullness, such as men call hobbies. A hobby is that wooden horse through which the clown in the circus puts his legs, and capers round the ring of sawdust, and belabours an opposite clown with a bladder at the end of a stick. It is true, that home, friendship, religion, and food, might all be called, in relation to our work, outside interests: but they are not hobbies. They get inside us, and urge us forward. With a hobby, the situation is reversed; we get inside it, and urge it forward. That is a hobby, an artificial outside interest, which looks as if it were sustaining and impelling us, when we are sustaining and impelling it.

I imagine a man who, at forty-five, having before his eyes the fear of an aimless retirement, took, for a hobby, the modern drama. He went to all the new plays in London, talked of them, wrote of them, and signed his articles; he even ran over to Paris to see plays there: at last he wrote a play, paid for its production, and it was fairly successful. By the time he was fifty, he was full of theatrical criticism; and people who were well said, *What a delightful man to sit next; such wide interests; I don't know when I've enjoyed a dinner-party more:* but people who were ill said, *Oh, the doctor who is so fond of Ibsen. I cannot*

help thinking, as my case is such a peculiar one, I would rather have somebody else. At fifty-five, he had written two more plays, which failed, and a book, profusely illustrated, on the Modern Drama in Germany; having unearthed the Beautiful even there. He made less than two hundred pounds, that year, in practice. At sixty, he retired, and set to work on a Royal Institution lecture on the Meaning of Maeterlinck; which he gave ultimately to a suburban literary society. In retirement, he lost heart, left off caring about plays, came to himself. Medicine does not trouble to recover her prodigal sons: once we take our portion and go into a far country, there we stop till there we drop. He began to be in want, he and his wife and the children; and he lived, poor gentleman, till he was seventy-five.

Velox, also, lived longer than was quite agreeable to him: but was comforted, always, by the thought that he had done everything for the best, had worked hard and close, lost no opportunity, never swerved from his purpose. He mourned the death of his work; but rejoiced, that his work and he had never, all those many years, been apart, never at variance. He had loved, cherished, and honoured his work; sentences of the marriage-service, he often used to say, ran in his head — *With my body I thee worship; I take thee only unto me* — Never a cross word, for near forty years, between him and his work: he consoled himself with that precious memory. Every

doctor, sooner or later, must lay his practice in her grave. He who has not loved her, will soon see her buried, and will hardly be sorry : and the general air of her obsequies will be that of Gounod's Funeral March of a Marionette. But Velox, at the burial of his love, was crying, yet a grand figure ; and the whole place was black with mourning, and a hundred kind hearts put up the shutters of respect and pity.

By and by, he began to find contentment in odd nooks and corners of life, which from want of time he had left unexplored : found what a host of friends he had, and what wonderful grandchildren, and how casual and off-hand had been his estimates of other men's words and deeds. Of course, he had his bad times of dullness and loneliness. Especially, at those hours of the day which were most unkind, he must sit and hear the devil saying, *Nobody wants you now.* That was horrible, the sense that he was inventing engagements, protracting occupations, playing at work ; that his colleagues had put him on the Board of the Hospital to give him something to do and keep him from moping ; that an old patient, now and again, would consult him as it were out of charity. Or he would be cut by the sense of the finality of his loss, or by its cruelty, its waste of all his experience ; or would be worrying himself that another man was attending Mrs. So-and-so, and did not know the ins and the outs of her case. Oh, he

had his bad times, he suffered. He took up no new pursuit of any importance; there was none that he cared to take. He found no rapture in the contemplation of the country, or in the destruction of lower forms of life: no bliss in organized philanthropy, and no allurement in poetry. To the end of his days, he remained shy of Nature, bored by solitude, and averse from the artistic temperament. Long ago, like the rulers of Plato's Republic, he had turned the poets and the musicians out of the kingdom of his life, and was not minded now to recall them: besides, if he had, they would not have come.

But Heaven gave him, thus disabled in its service, a handsome pension. Great respect is paid, by Heaven, to the Employers' Liability Act; and it accepts the extension of that Act even to those whom it employs only for odd jobs at infrequent intervals: but Velox, of course, had been in regular employment. It is not in a hurry to pay all claims: indeed, some people are of opinion that application must be made in person. Anyhow, Velox got his pension, paid in every coin of that realm: but I am not speaking from experience of such transactions. I only know that he was paid, in peace of mind, in a clear conscience, in home-love, in a name honoured far and wide, in faith and hope, and in shrewd and mellow wisdom. For the sake of his work, he had lived in a groove, in a narrow sort of way; and

behold, now that he was permanently out of work, he had the reward of that way.

Back we come to the meaning of the word Retirement, and to my threefold vision of the soldier, the amoeba, and the hermit. He who dares not be narrow when he is young, from fear he shall be dull in old age, is the amoeba: when he retires, he stops. Velox, in his retirement, attained something of the courage of a soldier, the patience of a saint. And he had need of these graces. Here, at last, thinking of him, I find one more figure of retirement. It is our school. It prepares us, none too pleasantly, to go up to the University of Old Age, that grim seat of desperate learning, where we finish our education, and take our degree.

THE VERY END

By the time that they come to the sea, all great rivers are much alike. Their surroundings are blank and flat, no longer the hills and the woods, and not yet the cliffs. Their waters, no longer sweet, and not yet salt, have lost force, and are swayed by the tides. All depth of colour, sharpness of outline, and strength of purpose, are gone from rivers thus dying; neither the sea, nor the land, seems to want them, and they are neither at work nor at rest. No more adventures for a river so near its end, no surprises in store for it, no hope of further increase. It has taken its last tribute from the hills, and has said goodbye to them; has given its blessing to its towns, and forgiven them their sins, their poisonous factories: has closed its account with earth. One or two ships, by way of trade, still find some hope of profit in this desolate stretch of the river's course, and come, and hang about, like distant relatives waiting on the mere chance of a legacy: but the river hardly recognizes them. Besides, it has

nothing now that it can call its own. Long ago, it made its will, disposed of its property, gave everything to the children. It cannot even remember now what it did with its wealth; or it would have a thousand pleasant memories of gifts to every city and every field, right and left, all the way: but its mind is clouded and confused, for it is within a mile or two of its dissolution. Silent, lonely, passive, moving not of itself but of the tides, it becomes, hour by hour, less river and more sea; and dies, by inches, in its sleep.

Not all rivers end like that. Some run full tilt, laughing and shouting *Here goes*, and are gone; some leap from a height, and put an end to themselves, as if they had lost their senses; some just shuffle into the sea, in a slipshod fashion, as if they did not know that it was there; and some, fighting to the last moment, retain for a while, even among the waves, their colour and their outline. But these are the lesser rivers, that die young. There is something, but not much, to be said in praise of dying young. *Is there not something brave and spirited*, says Stevenson, *in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas?* And that Greek poet, who says that they whom the Gods love, die young, does not mean that they whom the Gods love, may live to be old, yet will always be

young: he means what he says. But what is the good of all this talk about the Gods, and bravery, and grace? Length of days is not a matter of choice. A river cannot end, with a plunge and a flourish, just when and where it likes: and a great, laborious river, many hundreds of miles old, is bound to have a lingering, monotonous time, on its way out.

Matthew Arnold, in *Sohrab and Rustum*, attributes a happier disposition to the Oxus. It moved rejoicing, he says, toward the sea, as toward home, longing to hear the dash of the waves. His narrative poems are none too light-hearted; and I cannot say how it may be with the Oxus, for I do not know that river, not even on the map. But the more common destiny of great rivers, at the very departure of life, is to be kept waiting, without rejoicing.

The reason why the river miserably straggles to an end in sandy deltas, is in the river itself. All the way, it has been bringing down tons of alluvial soil. By its own doing, it has prepared for itself a slow and difficult exit: the very length and breadth of its course have created these impeding deltas. Ever since it was born, it has been deciding how it will die; and cannot now go back on that decision.

Its dreams, as it falls asleep, are haunted by signals of coming change. Nothing happens; but

something, it is sure, is going to happen. The tides, it says, must mean something; so must the brackish taste of its waters, and the unfamiliar flakes of weed in them, and the appearance and disappearance of little islands, where strange birds wheel and light, and stay a minute, and are off again. Oh, there cannot be a doubt of it, with all these signallings and premonitions, something is certainly going to happen. Meanwhile, how slow it all is, this featureless, drifting, last bit of existence, neither one thing nor the other, neither here nor there.

So unkind may be the extremity of our old age. Take the case of that famous old servant of God, let us call him Prudens, the eminent surgeon. Consider what influence he had on the men and women of his time, and how his work enriched the fields of science and practice. All his life, he was learning and teaching: he gave back to mankind what he got from mankind, he turned the waste-products of disease to the uses of health. But, do what he would, he could not give away all that he amassed; and he brought down, to the coast-line of his life, great stores of alluvial knowledge. *Now*, he was told, *Stay where you are.* Nature showed him, at the last, no gratitude, no reverence, and, I would add, no mercy. She kept him waiting. He could neither enjoy, nor impart, his accumulated experiences: they lay in his mind, at last, as the deltas lie at the last of old Nile,

and he seemed to be trying to find his way out, among so many results, without strength to get past them. Science was become impossible, practice had long ago vanished; and even friendship was mostly a memory, for he could not see more than one or two friends. Work was at an end, and so were holidays. The sixteen-hours' day, the pride of overwork, had been his life. Visits and consultations and country journeys, Hospital practice and lectures, solemn committees, Royal Commissions, learned Societies, Councils and Congresses, and four or five hours of reading and writing after dinner, had been the material out of which he had still made time for religion, home, and society. He had, really, made Time: which is a most divine achievement. Now, it was all Time, and none of it of his making. He must be helpless, unable to walk, or to speak above a whisper, or to perform without distress the meanest functions of his body, or to put himself to bed. *Prudens, oh yes, he is alive, but very infirm: but he must be alive, or we should have heard of it.* That was now become his life, to go on being very infirm.

But Prudens, at the heart of his infirmities, was still Prudens; and faced the situation with that gravity, reticence, and authority which had always distinguished him in practice. Here was the last case that he would ever have, himself, a typical case of natural decay. Not a very interesting case, but,

take it or leave it, he would never have another: and some of its aspects appealed to him. For he had always been skilled in advising how lives which were past cure might yet be rendered valuable, and how they who would never be themselves again must adjust themselves to that loss. This last patient, himself, this foregone conclusion, this forlorn hope, would anyhow give him an opportunity to exercise judgment, and to make deliberate choice of a method of treatment.

Of course, he began the treatment in the first stage of the malady. There are two ways, and no more, of treating natural decay. You begin with active resistance: in the final stage, you have recourse to passive resistance. So long as he was capable of action, he clung to the remnant of his work; cherished every engagement that was still within his power, refused help, fasted from ease, and urged his tired limbs to be always at some employment. In brief, he went on doing all that he could do. Then, when active resistance was overborne and impossible, came the time of passive resistance. He made no protest; he was silent: you cannot imagine him playing to the gallery. He simply went on being all that he could be. In politics, the passive resister's goods are seized once a year: but Prudens suffered distraint daily, and that not on his goods but on himself. Impending Death had, as it were, put the bailiffs into the house of

his soul; *Very well*, said he, *they can take what they like:* and they did. They took his strength, his memory of names and faces, the sharpness of his senses, the use of his hands. Always, he managed somehow, by sleep, by force of will, by sheer grace, to repair, or almost to repair, the levy of the day before. There was always something still to be taken. He went without ceasing, and nobody bought him back; yet there he was, daily, much the same, to the very end, when there came a touch of pneumonia, which doctors call the old man's friend, and Death was left in possession.

The spirit of practice is positive that there was nothing to be seen but the multiplication of infirmities, the closing of the avenues of sense, the decay of the whole fabric. Neither in the last few months, nor in the last few days, was there any sudden light or heat from the embers of his life: they steadily cooled, and fell into ashes. Nothing happened; only, everything went. When everything had gone, he went. Somewhere in the brain, like one lamp not turned-out in an empty theatre, a little group of cells, for a few hours, did just complete the circuit; and then, not even that. But suppose that Prudens had been conscious up to the last moment, like that other eminent surgeon, who put his finger to his pulse, and waited till the instant came, and said *Stopped*, and died; yet here is nothing beyond ordinary facts.

Doctors, of course, have no special information here. We are as much in the dark, here, as everybody else. The spirit of practice bids us think of faith and hope as open questions, and confine our attention to charity: and, so far as the latter part of this injunction goes, we do not need much bidding.

Still, we have our private opinions. I am reminded, here, of one of my friends, who is of opinion that we should no more look to Nature for hope than to miracles for faith. He does not believe in miracles: and he finds no evidence in Nature of any order but that of Nature. Indeed, his professional familiarity with her senseless failures and useless cruelties, if that were all, would make him deny the possibility of any other order. But, well away from his work, he is just able, he tells me, with some trouble — and most things worth doing are troublesome — to find and hold, now and again, the belief that he, and not his brain, is conscious. He had the toothache lately, and declared to me that, according to his philosophy, he had the toothache, but, according to Haeckel, he was the toothache, or would be the toothache, if he were he, which, according to Haeckel, he could never hope to be, or be to hope. He added, that it was he who experienced the tooth in space, and the ache in time, and united these two dissimilar experiences, in his permanent identity, as the

toothache. I will not pretend, for it was a very bad tooth, that all his language was so philosophical. Anyhow, he was sure that we cannot be what we have, or have what we are.

But the toothache, after all, is not the sort of malady to shake a man's belief. What does that, is the dismal acquaintance of us doctors with brains injured, diseased, ill-developed, ill-nourished, wasted by drink, poisoned slowly by toxins, or suddenly held-up by an anaesthetic. These and the like facts are apt to haunt us, when we get home after the day's work. The doctor, let us say, has just been seeing a case of concussion. Back at home, he cannot doubt that his wife and the children, in the same circumstances, would present the same aspect as the patient; and the sudden thought runs into him like a pin, that he, and she, and all of them, especially the baby, are but organisms; to say nothing of the dog on the hearth-rug. For a moment, things look black: the home-talk flags, he is silent, addressing himself to that plateful of food which is on its way from being his to being he. The general impression, round about the table, is that Father is very tired; give him his pipe, and his slippers, and the evening paper: perhaps something has disagreed with him. Indeed, something has. That ugly log of a body, miles away, has disagreed with his faith.

Consider, again, the case of Prudens. The spirit

of practice was quite certain that he came to an absolute end. He had been he, and was become it. Like Michael and Satan in the legend, fighting over the body of Moses, so these two words, He and It, fought over the body of Prudens.

The river, to which I compared the course of Prudens' life, died, like him, by inches; without assurance of revisiting or remembering the land, or of retaining, in the sea, its limiting banks. Only, it felt sure that something was going to happen, and that the tides were not there for nothing. It was to suffer a sea-change, it felt sure of that, but was unable to think further. So, with Prudens, as we watched him, we felt sure that something was going to happen: but what it would be, and how he could still be he through it, we could not say. But rivers go out as candles go out. Their dissolution is a purely chemical process: they have no identity but in us. The death of Prudens, his dissolution, was also chemical, to all appearances: but we knew that his life had not been a matter of chemistry. So it seemed reasonable, to trust our memory of him, and to believe that he died as he had lived, at another level than that of the natural sciences. It was hard to see how he should still be individual and distinct: but we were sure that the individuality, which had distinguished him here, had been real. Once, he had been: somehow, therefore, he is: that was the argument. He

had been he: and, though words are useless here, the fact remains, that nobody has any right to play conjuring-tricks with the two most difficult words in our language, which are He and It. Prudens, not it but he, still he, went to what had been, always, the spiritual element of his life. The reality of that element, and the reality of him, part of it yet apart from it, are facts which he had so proved by the manner of his life that they were not challenged by the manner of his death.

EPILOGUE

It is the plain duty of us doctors, who are Life's paying guests, to be thankful for what we have received. A man is not likely to find it hard to be thankful, if only he will begin low enough down; he should approve the order of Life, as Lord Melbourne approved the order of the Garter: and, if he would be profoundly thankful, he must begin *de profundis*. Instances are recorded of people giving thanks before taking physic; not from any fear of the consequences, but with gladness anticipating them. It is not all of us who could be so good as that: but we might be more thankful for not having either to take physic or to submit to surgery, seeing how many thousands of invalids are passionately longing to be able to do without pain what we do without pleasure. Once a man were to particularize all the bodily acts which are health, he would be long over that list, and would include many advantages which the polite world does not name in general conversation. For our food, it should be easy to be thankful; and so we are, when

we are hungry: but the doctor is not fond of the use of grace before a big dinner. He knows too much, he foresees in the mind's eye the course of each course, he cannot pray over proteids and carbohydrates, and them in excess.

Advancing outside our bodies, we come to the question whether we need be thankful that we are so useful. It is not easy, because all of us are useful, and the supply of us exceeds the demand. But what of that? A man's use is what it is, though his work, if he should leave it, would in a few days be in hands no less able. The work is the man: it is not the work that counts, but the man at work. Here, at this level of thought, reasons for thankfulness extend all round us like a landscape: the help that we give, the lives that we save or prolong, the friendships that we make and keep to the end.

I have had losses: and my heart goes out to Dogberry, for he reckons his losses among his accomplishments. "I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to: and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him." They who have had losses are good company, and I am glad to be of their fellowship. A man would

like to possess this, that, and the other; but they who do without these luxuries may be as happy as they who have them. He would like to save the lives of Dukes; but the tissues of humbler folk are just as interesting. He would like to be immensely proud of his own performances, all of them; but who is, except a thrice-distilled fool? He would like to leave more money behind him — ah, that regret is sacred, and must not be profaned; but things may mend. He has not fulfilled his ambition to be at the top of the tree; but he can still congratulate himself that he is on a branch. The natural dignity of our work, its unembarrassed kindness, its insight into life, its hold on science — for these privileges, and for all that they bring with them, up and up, high over the top of the tree, the very heavens open, preaching thankfulness. Circle above circle, the reasons for it are established, out of the reach of words.

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